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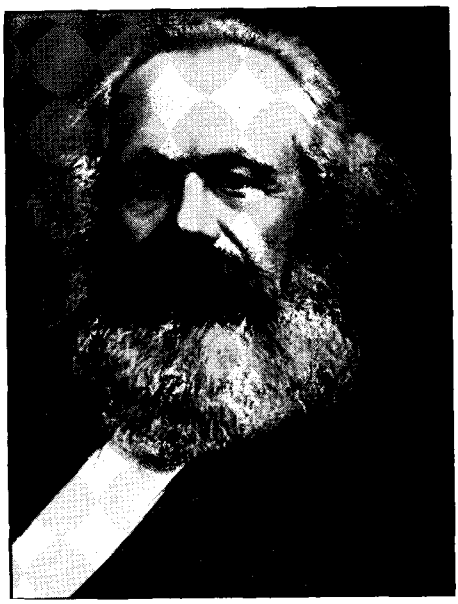

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VOL. XVIII, No. 9 SEPTEMBER, 1939

The COMMUNIST

A MAGAZINE OF THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MARXISM-LENINISM
PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE U.S.A.
EDITORS: EARL BROWDER, ALEX BITTELMAN, V. J. JEROME

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To the New Readers of "The Communist"

THIS MONTH THE COMMUNIST celebrates twenty years of struggle for labor's rights, for democracy, peace and socialism. You who may be reading THE COMMUNIST for the first time will see in it an instrument for reinterpreting the past and for charting the course of the future; for revealing social forces and motives hitherto hidden. You will find in it a projector throwing its light upon our country's heritage of revolutionary and democratic traditions. You will hear in it the voice of the vanguard in the struggle to deepen and extend the people's democratic attainments to their highest form—socialism.

THE COMMUNIST is a magazine which each month interprets events in the light o fthe scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism. Its pages will afford intellectual stimulation to every thoughtful American—even to those who may not accept the viewpoint of the Communist Party. In the course of the coming months it will feature articles dealing with questions of foreign policy; with problems of the labor movement, of the Negro people, of the struggle for America's social and national security; with aspects of American history, the sciences, and of dialectical materialism. These are problems you frequently discuss with your friends. In a rapidly changing world, in which the relation of forces between classes, nations and systems is in constant flux, THE COMMUNIST will help to keep you informed and to guide you in your sphere of activity.

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For the convenience of all our readers, and especially for our new readers, a subscription form will be found on the back cover, offering a valuable book premium with each yearly subscription, as part of the twentieth anniversary celebration of the Communist Party. Mail together with your remittance and THE COMMUNIST will be yours for a whole year.

THE EDITORS.

(See back cover)

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REVIEW OF THE MONTH

Celebrating Our Twentieth Anniversary. The First Marxist Groups in the United States. Russia and America. Peculiarities of American Capitalism and the Ideology of Jeffersonian Democracy. Main Tasks of the First Marxist Groups Left Unfulfilled. Two Fundamental Recurring Problems. The Socialist-Labor Party and the Socialist Party. Populism and Marxism. Healthy Instincts and Leftist Policies. An American Marxist-Leninist Party Makes Its Appearance. Struggling for Democracy in the Era of Imperialism. What Is the Meaning of Bolshevization. The Foundations of a Marxist Party of a New Type. On Ideology and Politics. Stalin's Advice on Propaganda of Theory. Making More Effective Our Tactical Line. Browder's Book on the Fight for Peace. Organizational Practice in Light of Principles.

WE ARE celebrating the twentieth anniversary of our Party.

Among political parties in the country, it is still a young party and a new one in many respects. But it has already made a place for itself in the political set-up of the nation. Coming from the midst of the American working class and responding to the historic need of a vanguard proletarian political organization, the Communist Party of the United States has become an inseparable part of its class and of its people. It is making a distinct and special contribution to the growth of the American proletariat into a leading factor in the affairs of the nation. Whether so recognized or not at the present time, the Communist Party has already proved to be in fact an invaluable and indispensable factor for the progress and democracy of the people.

Ever larger numbers of the American people are coming to realize and appreciate this important fact.

Our Party made its appearance through two organizations—the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party—in September, 1919. It was born in the process of struggle by the class-conscious workers of America against the imperialist war of 1914-18, against the opportunist and anti-working class policies of the official leadership of the labor movement, and in the long search for the kind of a political party that would effectively promote and lead the liberation movement of the working class and of the masses of the people. The liberation from monopoly domination and capitalism.

Our Party was born in the midst of the world revolutionary crisis that prevailed in the post-war years. Its coming into existence was hastened by the ruthless post-war offensive of monopoly capital upon the toiling people of America—the workers, exploited farmers, Negroes—and by the consequent anti-monopoly mass move-

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ments and mass struggles. And from the very beginning, the American Communists looked upon the Bolshevik Party of Russia, the leader of the victorious great Socialist Revolution, as the model party, *as the world exponent of Marxist and proletarian ideology.*

1. OUR PREDECESSORS OF THE CIVIL WAR PERIOD

These have been the immediate and most direct sources of the Party's origin. But the pre-history of our Party and its traditions go way back to the first Marxist groups in the United States, to the period of the First International of Marx and Engels, which rendered active support to the struggle of the American people under President Lincoln, to save the Union and its democracy from the rebellious slaveholders.

We have had a relatively long *pre*-history. And in this must lie some important and special significance. The idea suggests itself at once that the class-conscious workers of this country, and its Marxists, must have encountered certain special problems on the road of creating an American Marxist party which they had difficulties in solving.

In Russia, for example, the first Marxist group, the "Emancipation of Labor" group, was formed by G. V. Plekhanov in 1883. About nineteen years later, in 1902, appeared Lenin's famous work *What Is To Be Done?* which presented "a brilliant exposition of the ideological foundations of a Marxist party" (*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*).

One year after that, at the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, the Bolsheviks under Lenin emerged as a separate political group of revolutionary Marxism as against the exponents of opportunism, the Menshevik group. And in January, 1912, at the historic Prague Conference, "the Bolsheviks formally constituted themselves an independent party, the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (Bolsheviks)." The chronological course of development in Russia, from the first Marxian group to the formation of a Marxist-Leninist Party, is marked by the date lines—1883-1912, a little less than thirty years.

Our country presents a somewhat different picture. The first Marxist groups here go back to the 1860's. The rise of Marxist-Leninist groupings begins only around 1917-18, and the formation of a separate Marxist-Leninist party takes place in 1919. This makes a rough chronological distance, between the appearance of the first Marxist groups and the formation of a Communist Party, of more than fifty years. The course of ideological development of the class-conscious workers of America during these years, from the point of view of the rise of a Marxist party of a new type, presents a succession of advances, setbacks and advances again until the final emergence of our Party in the immediate post-war period.

Why this long road of pre-history? What lessons can we learn from that for our present and future?

Addressing the Russian Marxists at the beginning of this century, Lenin wrote:

> "History has now confronted us with an immediate task which is *the most revolutionary* of all the *immediate* tasks that confront

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the proletariat of any country. The fulfillment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark not only of European but also (it may now be said) of Asiatic reaction would make the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary movement." (*What Is to Be Done?*)

It was in the solution of this task, in the organization of the working class of Russia *to lead the people* to the overthrow of tsarism, that the Russian Marxists found their great opportunity to create their own party, to hammer out the *universal* foundations of a Marxist party in the epoch of imperialism *everywhere* (ideological, tactical and organizational), to become the model party for Marxists in all countries.

Seeing it from this angle, it becomes clear at once that the first Marxist groups in America were confronted with different immediate tasks. All Marxists, in all capitalist countries, were confronted with the *same* historic task as regards the *final* aims of the movement—the abolition of capitalism and the socialist reorganization of society. In this there was no difference of tasks between the first Marxists in Russia and in America. It was in the *immediate* main task that the difference existed and in this, the situation was more favorable for the Russian Marxists.

It was more favorable for two main reasons. First, the Russian working class was facing a most revolutionary task of general national importance—the overthrow of tsarism and the establishment of democracy—for the solution of which *working class leadership was indispensable.* Hence, the great possibilities for a workers' Marxist party to become the leader of the people. Secondly, the solution of this immediate revolutionary task was taking place in the imperialist epoch, in the epoch of decaying capitalism. Hence, the inherent possibilities of the bourgeois-democratic revolution *passing over or growing over directly into the socialist revolution.* The Marxist-Leninist party in Russia realized both of these possibilities.

What was the immediate revolutionary task that faced the first Marxist groups in the United States? A good cue to answering this question, we find in the famous letter sent to Abraham Lincoln by the First International led by Marx and Engels. There we read:

"The working men of Europe feel sure that, as the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the middle class, so the American anti-slavery war will do for the working classes."

This was an immediate *democratic* revolutionary task. It was the task of settling the anti-slavery struggle in a complete, thorough manner, by eliminating all *economic* roots of slavery and reaction, and by developing *a more advanced* democracy of workers and farmers. Hence, quite a favorable historic setting for the growth of a Marxist party in the United States. But not as favorable as in Russia from the 1880's on. The objective need of working class leadership in the anti-slavery struggle was great indeed but not so apparent either to the American workers or to the masses of the people generally, as was the need of working class leadership in the overthrow of tsarism in Russia. Besides, the anti-slavery fight in America took place in the *pre*-imperialist era and not in the imperialist one, as did the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia. Therefore, the inherent pos-

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sibilities *for a rapid and direct* growing over of the anti-slavery struggle into a struggle for socialism were not present here to the same *qualitative* extent as in Russia. Hence, the opportunities here for the growth of a Marxist party were not as great. Consequently, the slower tempo of development.

But this is not the whole story. Why? Because, while the inherent possibilities were not the same as in tsarist Russia, either in quality or in quantity, great opportunities for building a vanguard Marxist party were here none the less. The trouble was that the first Marxist groups did not always know how to make effective use of these opportunities. As Engels remarked in later years, the American Marxists did not always understand their theory, treating it mostly as a dogma instead of as a guide to action.

When we say a guide to action (perhaps this has to be understood a bit better), we mean *a guide.* And this is how Lenin and the Bolsheviks treated Marxist theory. The *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* offers the best and most instructive demonstration of this fact. It shows *in life,* in the rich example of the first victorious socialist revolution, how the Bolsheviks, Lenin and Stalin, were guided by Marxist theory, and in the process developed this theory further as a living science.

Lenin and Stalin studied that theory profoundly and intensively, seeking to master it—and they did. That is why they also understood that this theory had to be *applied to Russia,* to the solution of those specific tasks and the overcoming of those specific difficulties as well as the utilization of those specific opportunities which confronted them in their own struggles. They did so, always making full use of the revolutionary experiences of all other countries. Unfortunately, this was not the way American Marxists treated their theory, either in profundity of study and mastery or in *application* to the specific conditions of the United States.

For example. The first serious work undertaken by Lenin as a young Marxist was an exhaustive and complete study of the development of capitalism in Russia. Why? Because it was a sharp controversial question posed by the Narodniks (Populists) who maintained that Russia would skip over the capitalist stage of development, that consequently there would be no proletariat of any importance, that finally the peasantry would become the *leading* force in the revolution against tsarism and in the struggle for socialism. If that were true, Marxism would have no validity for Russia and the theory as a whole would cease to be a universal science of society and universal ideology of the proletariat. It would also mean that there would be no socialist revolution in Russia.

It was obvious to the Russian Marxists that these contentions of the Narodniks were groundless. Far from Russia skipping the capitalist stage, Russian Marxists were able to point to innumerable evidence that capitalism in Russia had already been penetrating the economy of the country ever since the abolition of serfdom in the 1860's. But Lenin was also able to see, and then to prove, that the development of capitalism in Russia was displaying certain important

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peculiarities, specifically Russian. He proved that—

". . . although capitalism was developing in Russia, she was still an agrarian, economically backward country, a petty-bourgeois country, that is, a country in which low-productive individual peasant farming based on small ownership still predominated." *(History of C.P.S.U.[B.].)*

And from this important fact, seen in the light of the world situation and imperialist era, he drew certain conclusions of program and tactics. Conclusions regarding the immediate revolutionary task for the overthrow of tsarism, on the leading role of the working class, on the alliance between the working class and all other toiling classes, mainly the peasantry. In other words, he *applied* Marxist theory to Russian conditions. And because he was doing all of this in the struggle for socialism—in the struggle for the realization of an *international* task of the proletariat of all countries—he and his followers were developing further the Marxist theory as a universal science.

Not so the American Marxists. Of course, the problems confronting them were different. They did not have to combat Narodnik illusions and reactionary theories that America would skip the capitalist stage. The development of capitalism in America was never in dispute. But there were other illusions and theories, specifically and peculiarly American, that were militating against the growth of the political independence of the American working class and the rise of a revolutionary Marxist party. And these petty-bourgeois illusions and theories grew out precisely of the peculiarities in the development of capitalism in America.

2. JEFFERSONIAN DEMOCRACY AND THE WORKING CLASS

The development of capitalism in a new country, practically a continent, with an ever-expanding frontier, with relatively few pre-capitalist economic relations—all this was bound to produce a number of specific features of the greatest importance. Capitalism here was developing simultaneously in depth and in width, extensively and intensively. Modern capitalist industry was growing intensively, becoming centralized and concentrated, in the already settled parts of the new country (the Northeast), while new capitalist relations, mainly agrarian, were springing up continually and extensively in the movement to the West, with the South seeking to perpetuate and expand its own slave economy. As a result, agriculture and agrarian interests were playing a major part in the economic and political life of the country for a considerable period of time. The conflict between agrarianism and industrialism was a fundamental one, decisive for political line-ups, practically until after the anti-slavery war.

From the angle of class relations, Engels characterized this process as due to:

". . . the dual character of America's development, which, for one thing, is still working on the first task—clearing off the vast virgin territories, and, for another, is already compelled to compete for supremacy in industrial production.

"This is what causes the ups and downs in the movement, depending upon whether the industrial worker or the farmer tilling virgin soil preponderates in the average mind."*

* Engels to Sorge, January 16, 1895.

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Here therefore is the source of the conceptions of an agrarian democracy, so fully expressed by Jefferson. They are directly traceable to the simultaneous extensive and intensive development of American capitalism and to the *conflict* between the older and the continually rising newer capitalism, to the fight between industrialism and agrarianism.

The progressive historic role of Jeffersonian democracy is beyond doubt and so is the positive power of its traditions for the democratic struggle today. But it is equally beyond doubt that the *ideology* of an agrarian democracy has tended in later years, especially since the Civil War, *to obstruct* the growth of the political independence of the American working class as well as to *delay* the rise of a Marxist party in the United States. Early American Marxists have not appreciated fully the negative side of this ideology and have done little to analyze and combat it *with a proletarian Marxist ideology.*

With what result? With the result that the possibilities for initiating "a new era of ascendancy" for the "working classes"—workers and farmers—possibilities that were objectively inherent in the struggle against slavery were not realized; that the working class continued for many decades to be the tail end to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois movements, the captive of bourgeois ideologies; that the rise of a truly Marxist party, the process of its emergence and crystallization into a leader of the masses, has been similarly delayed and protracted.

It is quite evident that the early American Marxists were slow in realizing that, with the period opening in the 1860's, the fate of American democracy and its progress to more advanced forms no longer rested with those classes and social combinations which gave rise to and supported the Jeffersonian agrarian democracy. The latter rested primarily upon the farmers, was supported by artisans and industrial workers, and was led and ideologically dominated by liberal bourgeois and landlords.

In the social and political crisis which produced the Civil War, this class alliance was also undergoing a crisis. A new alignment of forces was in the making—workers, farmers, Negroes and the *radical* sections of the bourgeoisie, with the working classes beginning to come to the forefront. It was upon this *new* class alliance, then in the first stages of crystallization, that the fate and progress of American democracy was depending. And its further crystallization and success hinged primarily upon the simultaneous development of working class political independence, upon the growth of its influence as a leading class, upon the strength of a proletarian Marxist ideology among the industrial workers, upon the growth and mass influence of a Marxist party.

To stimulate these developments, the early American Marxists had to face and tackle several important tasks. They had to *apply* the Marxist theory to the *specific* American conditions, developing the *ideological* foundations of a Marxist party. They had to master the theory as a guide to action, as a guide to ideological struggle, in the first instance, seeking to free the minds of the workers, of its most advanced sections, from the illusions and prejudices that came together with the ideologies of agrarian democracy. That was the first job, but

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one that was hardly tackled and left essentially unfulfilled.

It was necessary, furthermore, to develop the *tactical* foundations of a Marxist party in America, in accord with the principles of the *Communist Manifesto* published in 1848. The First International of Marx and Engels had given the American Marxists in later years even more specific indications to the approach and solution of this task, when it threw the full support of the world labor movement behind President Lincoln in the struggle against slavery, pointing out that this was the opportunity for an era of ascendancy of the working classes of America. That constituted a definite lead to the working out of the tactical foundations of a Marxist party in America for that epoch. It led directly to the tactical principle of an alliance between the proletariat, the farmers, the Negroes and the toiling people of the cities, with the working class striving to assume progressively an ever more influential and leading part in that alliance. It opened the vista of a new and more advanced democracy as the road to socialism. That was a second basic job. But that too was left unfulfilled. While the early American Marxists, and the workers generally, contributed a good deal to the defeat of the slaveholders' rebellion, supporting President Lincoln's policies in that fight, they did not find their way to those tactical principles which could help to realize the coming of the "era of ascendancy" for the working classes.

And, lastly, it was necessary to work out the *organizational* foundations of a Marxist party. The specific forms of vanguard group in the mass movements, so well developed by Engels. The organizational relationships to the mass struggles of the period and mass organizations. The inner structure and functioning of the vanguard group.

The question naturally is not raised here of the creation of a party of a new type, exemplified by the Bolshevik Party. We must see the thing historically. The new type of party, created by Lenin and Stalin, was made objectively necessary and possible only in the imperialist era, when capitalism had reached its highest and last stage of development and when the socialist revolution was placed directly on the order of the day by history itself. That was not the type of party that was historically necessary or possible in the latter 1860's or early 1870's when the first Marxist groups made their appearance in America. The socialist revolution and the direct struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat were *not* in that period on the order of the day.

The tasks that were standing on the order of the day—ideological, tactical and organizational—had been broadly formulated in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Marx and Engels as far back as 1848. And it is the type of Marxist party that this *Manifesto* envisaged that we are discussing here, the type that was objectively possible and necessary in America with the emergence of the first Marxist groups, but which these groups had great difficulties in bringing about. Engels, in his time, has expressed himself on the question repeatedly. And what he noted and criticized was the inability of the early Marxists here to link up their theory with the actual struggles of the masses,

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to link themselves up with these struggles, mass movements and organizations, to help the masses learn the correctness of Marxist principles and program on the basis of *their own experiences,* and to build the Marxist party in the process of these mass activities. In other words, he criticized their sectarianism and dogmatism.

There is no doubt that the inability of the early Marxists to formulate the correct organizational principles for an American Marxist party of that period was a serious contributing factor in the slow rise of such a party.

And in general: the inability of the early Marxists to translate the ideological, tactical and organizational principles of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* of Marx and Engels into terms of American reality and of the *American class struggle,* making the utmost use of the *experiences* of the revolutionary movements of *other countries,* this deficiency in *mastering* the Marxist theory was the one subjective factor responsible for the slow rise of a Marxist party in the United States.

This critical estimate of the early Marxists should of course be viewed in the light of their significant basic contributions to the advance of Marxian thought in the United States and to the building of mass working class organizations.

3. RELATION OF PROLETARIAN VANGUARD TO MASS MOVEMENTS

The two problems that were giving the American working class militants and Socialists the greatest trouble have been the attitude to the trades unions and to the popular mass political movements of their time. These troubles and problems kept on recurring and repeating themselves through several decades in a great variety of forms and shapes. The Socialist Labor Party was bothered by them from the 1870's on. The split in that party and the formation of the Socialist Party in 1900 were determined largely by these issues. The Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) was formed in the struggle around these same questions. Every subsequent Left-wing development in the trade unions and in the Socialist movement was making its major fights on these issues. And in the struggles of the Left wing of 1917-18, which organized our Party, these problems occupied a basic place. In new forms, requiring and receiving from our Party different solutions, these problems are still with us today.

Here, the first thing to be observed is that the trade unions became mass movements of the workers *before* the emergence of a Marxist party. Comrade Stalin had occasion to point out this fact, characteristic of most western countries (Western Europe and America), and to draw the tactical consequences for Communists in *this* epoch. But there is also good food in Stalin's analysis for fruitful thought on the experiences of the American workers in previous epochs.

The essence of this analysis, given in 1925, is that because the trade unions arose in the Western countries, in distinction from Russia, prior to the appearance of Marxist parties, the trade unions became the fundamental organs of struggle of the workers against capitalist exploitation. As a consequence Marxist parties found themselves pushed aside and to the background, with their activities reduced mainly to parliamentary politi-

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cal activities—election campaigns. In the eyes of the workers, therefore, the strong mass trade unions assumed much greater importance than the small working class political parties.

This was exactly the situation in America from the 1870's until the beginnings of this century. Important although new features of this situation *still prevail.*

What was the reaction of the American Socialists and working class movements to this condition? The opportunists and reformists, both in the unions and Socialist movement, welcomed it and sought to perpetuate it. Some of them openly fought the idea of a Marxist party or any working class independent political action. Others sought as a matter of "theory" to keep the Marxist party in the position of a tail end and appendage to the trade unions—just a machinery for election campaigns. Both of these opportunist positions, exemplified in later years by Gompers and Hillquit, worked against the rise of a Marxist party to position of leadership and influence.

On the other hand, the Lefts and militants, in the unions and in the Socialist movement, rebelled against that. But how? By advocating and organizing Socialist or revolutionary trade unions, on the one hand, and by abandoning or narrowing the scope of political action, on the other. The policies and practices of the Socialist Labor Party under De Leon offer a complete example of this reaction of the Lefts and militants to opportunism. The Socialist Labor Party organized its "own" unions and reduced the political activities of the proletariat to the abstract propaganda of socialism. From this sectarian position, which *isolated* the advanced sections of the working class both from the mass economic struggles of the workers and their mass unions as well as from the popular political mass movements of the time, there was only one step to the complete abandonment of political action and to various trends of syndicalism and anarcho-syndicalism. The rise and development of the I.W.W. show how this actually happened.

In other words, the Lefts and militants in the labor movement undertook to meet trade union and political opportunism by sectarianism and dogmatism instead of finding an effective and correct *concretization* for the vanguard role of Marxists in the labor movement on the basis of the principles formulated by Marx and Engels.

There was also another reaction to the sectarianism and dogmatism of the Socialist Labor Party. It expressed itself in the split which occurred in that party and in the formation of the Socialist Party in 1900. Historically, this development had a number of progressive features. Responding to the spirit of the times, as exemplified by the early years of the Second (Socialist) International which was formed in 1889, the Socialist Party sought to come into contact with the masses and to establish collaborative relations with the mass trade unions. But this party too, as a party of the proletarian vanguard appearing *in the beginning of the imperialist era,* failed to solve successfully this problem.

The main reason for the failure is to be found in the fact that the new Socialist Party did not realize that it was being born in a new era—decay

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of capitalism and its last stage of development—an era which required the building of a Marxist party of *a new type,* a Bolshevik Party. Instead, the dominating leadership of the Socialist Party (though consisting of various trends and tendencies) was going on the supposition that it was still living in the pre-imperialist era, *duplicating* in the main the policies and practices of the Second International and of its strongest party at the time—the Social-Democratic Party of Germany.

Consequently, the experiences of the Socialist Party began to demonstrate to the class-conscious workers that it was not functioning as a vanguard revolutionary party of the proletariat. This naturally gave rise to Left movements and tendencies, vaguely reflecting the urge and need for the new type of Marxist party. Haywood and Debs come to mind at once, in this connection. In later years we find Foster, Ruthenberg and Browder. These currents and tendencies in the labor movement were already profiting from the proven futility and dangers of both reformist opportunism and sectarian opportunism, looking therefore towards newer and more effective ways of organizing the class-conscious workers into a revolutionary vanguard of the American proletariat. But it was a slow and painful process, made more protracted and complicated *by the lack of a firm Marxist ideology, by considerable isolation from the currents of revolutionary Marxism in other countries, and by a certain degree of general provincialism.*

Nothing perhaps demonstrates more clearly the failure of the Socialist Party to realize that it had to build itself into a party of a new type than its attitudes towards the popular political mass movements of the time—the various populist movements and tendencies, maturing non-partisan groupings among farmers, labor party and farmer-labor party trends, which are so significant for the late 1890's and the first two decades of the present century. One must speak here of different attitudes of various groups in the Socialist movement, rather than of a united party position.

One such attitude was a carry-over from the ideologies of Jeffersonian agrarian democracy. It accepted these popular movements altogether *uncritically* in an ideological sense, although these movements were dominated in ideas and policies by the farmers and sections of urban petty bourgeoisie. And it tended to make the Socialist Party the tail end to these movements, contributing not a little towards again submerging the rising elementary political independence of the working class.

Another attitude was a carry-over and *mechanical duplication* of the policies and tactics of the Social-Democratic parties in Western Europe, mostly from Germany. Not an examination of rich experiences for application to specific conditions here, but outright duplication. What is even worse, duplication of opportunist distortions of Marxism, duplication of opportunist *resistance* to develop Marxism *further* to meet the needs of the imperialist era for the building of a new type of party. This attitude practically ignored the popular movements "because" they were not Marxian movements, "because" they were not proletarian movements, "because" they were competing po-

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litically with the Socialist Party. Therefore, keep the Socialist Party away from them.

What happened in life was something else altogether. The workers were *not* kept away; they went with these movements, naturally and correctly so, because the populist tendencies were essentially anti-monopoly and mass democratic movements of the greatest importance to the working class as a class with a socialist historic mission to perform. Nor was the Socialist Party itself kept away. Large numbers of individual Socialists and organizations, especially in the West and South, went all the way into these movements and became submerged in them. This was the actual practice.

As to the theory of it, the essential thing is the complete failure to see the working class as the potential *leader* of the toiling people, and the need of its *alliance* with the farmers and petty bourgeoisie in the struggle against the monopolies; the failure to see this as the main line of struggle against reaction and capitalism, as the highway to socialism. It is the failure, in other words, to develop and apply Marxism to the conditions of the imperialist era, to the tasks of preparing and leading the working class to the struggle for the highest form of democracy—socialist democracy. It was opposition and resistance to the development of a Marxist party in America of a new type.

Still another attitude was that of most of the Lefts and militants. It was one of hostility to the popular movements as dangerous and detrimental to the interests of the workers. On these grounds: It is petty bourgeois, middle class and farmer. It does not aim at the abolition of the wage system. Therefore, it is against labor. It is led and dominated by bourgeois and middle class politicians. Bourgeois politics is against labor. Hence, labor must be opposed to these movements. The more extreme views in this trend, being altogether skeptical of political action and merging ideologically with anarcho-syndicalism, were hostile to the populist movements on all grounds.

This was no doubt a natural and, in some respects, healthy reaction to the petty-bourgeois vulgarizations of the Jeffersonian traditions as well as to the duplicators of the opportunist policies of German Social-Democracy. On such reactions, as Lenin pointed out, good Marxian ideology can be built. But there had to be the Marxian ideology. There had to be the concretization and development of Marxism to the new conditions and the new era. There had to be the orientation toward and vista of a party of a new type that knows how to educate the working class to its historic mission, to promote its alliances and leadership; that understands how to work with progressive democratic movements without becoming submerged; that knows moreover how to assist the working class and labor movement to become stronger, more politically independent and more influential in the affairs of the nation, eventually becoming the leaders of people, *precisely through alliances and participation in general democratic movements.* But none of this was present with sufficient clarity, if at all, in the Socialist Party up until the rise of its Left wing in 1917-18. Then it was that the vague sensings and yearnings of the militants since the opening of this century for a new type of party

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began to find more or less clear expression.

But here we are coming to the experiences of the first world imperialist war. It was the victory of the great Socialist Revolution in Russia under Bolshevik leadership and the beginning of the general crisis of the capitalist system with the resulting profound changes in America. It was the break-up of the traditional ideological isolation from the Marxist revolutionary currents abroad and, in the first place, the spread of Leninism. It was the current great mass struggles and maturing shifts in class relations in this country. It was all of this, on the background of our pre-history, that produced a new Left wing, the one that organized the Communist movement in 1919, thus laying the foundation for the Marxist party of a new type.

4. WHY A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE TWO PARTIES?

The two decades of our Party's life could be summed up as the history of building an American Marxist-Leninist party, orientated towards making it as good and influential a party as the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Stalin. From a somewhat different angle, the course of our Party's life from 1919 to 1939 could also be described as the process of crystallizing a revolutionary proletarian vanguard in the struggle of the American people *for democracy* in the epoch of the general crisis of capitalism and socialist revolution. Both views are objectively real and closely interconnected.

It is this fact that makes possible and highly desirable a *comparative study* of the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the history of the Communist Party of the United States. In the foregoing, we have tried to indicate the approaches to such a study.

Communists, and many non-Communists, are well familiar with the fact that, beginning with about 1924, when the post-war revolutionary wave was beginning temporarily to recede, all Communist Parties, upon Stalin's advice, began concentrating *on Bolshevizing themselves.* And this was the main content of the guidance of the Communist International. What did this mean, in brief?

In an article "On the International Situation," published by Stalin in the *Bolshevik* in September, 1924, twelve concise requirements are formulated indicating the path to Bolshevization. Where these requirements have been mastered and assimilated, and to the extent that this has taken place, the Communist Parties in the Western countries were becoming more valuable to their working classes and their peoples, more effective contributors to the struggles of the masses of their own countries for a better life and future.

In the United States, the factional struggle in the Party, lasting from 1924 to 1928, has obscured from the membership the full meaning of the document for these years, seriously retarding and obstructing the Bolshevization process. It should be added that this historic document, which has already played a tremendous role in the revolutionary labor movement of the world, continues to be one of the best guides to the building of a Marxist party of a new type.

One of the requirements in this document is that such a party has to work out its policies and slogans, not

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on the basis of memorized formulas and historical parallels, but by a most careful analysis of the concrete conditions of the revolutionary movement in the country, internal and international, taking full account of the revolutionary experiences in other countries. When we study the history of the Soviet Party, we see that this was exactly what the Bolsheviks did in Russia, *proceeding from the theory of Marxism,* which they had mastered. And because they did so in order to accomplish an immediate task that was more profoundly revolutionary than any facing the working class in other countries in this epoch, and also because their main line of struggle was for democracy *in the imperialist era,* they not only became the leaders of the first victorious socialist revolution, but also developed further the Marxist science to the needs of the epoch everywhere, hammering out a set of ideological, tactical and organizational principles *of universal validity.*

Not for the purpose of drawing mechanical analogies and historic parallels. No, that is not the Bolshevik method as the history of the Soviet Party brilliant demonstrates. But for the purposes of mastering the Marxist-Leninist theory; of seeing how these principles of universal validity originated and thus grasping their full meaning; of studying and finding out what the application of a principle means in actual life; of thus becoming scientifically convinced that these principles *are* of universal validity; for *these* purposes, a comparative study of the histories of the two parties becomes desirable and necessary.

The Bolsheviks struggled against tsarism and for democracy as the road to socialism, to the highest form of democracy—a democracy more real for the masses, and eventually, for the nation, than any bourgeois democracy can be. And they struggled in the imperialist era, which contained the possibility of the struggle for bourgeois democracy passing over directly into the struggle for socialist democracy. When this is clearly grasped, it becomes at once evident that here precisely lies the *international* significance of the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

For the question immediately presents itself like this: isn't this *essentially* the content of our own struggles? We may not always have been conscious of it; in fact, we weren't. But that doesn't change the objective fact that the struggle for socialism in the United States has been and is a struggle for democracy. True, we had no tsarist regime to overthrow in the two decades of our existence and that makes a world of difference, of course. Yet to say this alone is not enough. Our bourgeois revolution occurred in 1776, but left many of its objective tasks unfulfilled. The struggle against slavery and for saving the *Union* had to complete these and did so in part. *But not altogether.* General immediate democratic tasks were still facing the American people at the time our Party came into existence—to complete the unification of the country and to make its democracy *more real* for the masses of the people, aside from the democratic task of Negro liberation.

Besides, this was a time when the dominating circles of the American bourgeoisie had become thoroughly reactionary—the imperialist monopo-

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listic bourgeoisie—and when the masses of the people were becoming conscious of this *new enemy* of American democracy, developing wide movements and struggles against it.

It is clear to us now, and has been for some time, that the main content of the American class struggle in this century—objectively—was the struggle for democracy as the road to the socialist revolution. Had we achieved a greater mastery of the Marxist-Leninist theory *earlier* in our history, a process greatly hampered by the factional struggle, we would have seen it much sooner. But the objective fact is there. The process of the struggle for the preservation and extension of bourgeois-democracy and the inherent possibilities for passing over into the struggle for socialist democracy is there, too, displaying a rich variety of national characteristics and peculiarities in the relationship of class forces as well as in tempos of development. Hence, the possibility and need of the *comparative* study of the two histories. Hence, the universal validity of the foundations of a party of a new type hammered out by the Bolsheviks.

One must, of course, also take account of another consideration. Had the example of the Socialist Revolution in Russia been followed *successfully* by the proletariat in some of the large Western European countries, in the years 1918-23, the tempo of transition from the general democratic struggles to the socialist revolution would have been immensely quickened everywhere, also in America. But the reactionary leaders of Social-Democracy succeeded in preventing that. Hence, the subsequent rise of fascism while the Soviet Union was surging powerfully ahead with the building of socialism and its completion. A new world situation was thus beginning to face us. A new main and immediate enemy appeared, necessitating the united proletarian and anti-fascist people's front, for which the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International had formulated a tactical orientation—*an orientation based upon and flowing from the ideolgical and tactical foundations of a Marxist party hammered out by the Bolsheviks in three revolutions.*

Hence, our struggle became more consciously and definitely a struggle for democracy, for more democracy, for the highest form of democracy—socialism.

Hence, a comparative study of the history of the two parties has become an absolute necessity for every Communist, for every anti-fascist, for every progressive fighter in America. The *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* is *the guide* to the struggle for democracy.

5. TAKING STOCK AND LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

On the twentieth anniversary of our Party, we naturally take stock of conditions, ask ourselves where we stand, and take a look into the future. As we must do it here briefly, perhaps the shortest way to go about it would be as follows:

Ideologically: Where do we stand in this field? That we are making substantial progress, of this there cannot be the slightest doubt. But there are also new problems. Our ideology is under continual fire and that fire will increase as we go along. The sources of attack are the fascists, pro-fascists, and the general reactionary offensive. It is not just the direct attack on

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Communist program and policy; this is part of it. But it is also the attack on our principle and belief *in the liberating historic mission of the American working class,* the attack which seeks to undermine or prevent the consolidation of the self-confidence of the American proletariat, the faith in its ability to rally the people in the anti-fascist people's front, for the immediate task of defeating reaction and barring the road to fascism and, from that, to the socialist reorganization of society. This is the most serious attack on our ideology. It must be met more effectively.

From another angle, we can see the same thing in a somewhat different form. We are swimming in the stormy seas of daily political struggle. This is a great achievement. We are actively participating in broad majority movements and processes which lead to the defeat of reaction and fascism. Clearly, now more than ever, our ideological compass and navigating instruments must be kept in good condition and continually perfected. We don't want to lose our way. We want to be able always to give the correct orientation to our class and people.

Trotskyism and Lovestoneism, responding to the orders of the pro-fascist offensive, are doing their utmost to confuse and disrupt.

What is the answer? We know it. Strengthen and deepen our Marxist-Leninist ideology. In the Party, among the workers, among their progressive allies.

Recall what Stalin said about Marxist-Leninist training to the Eighteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.:

> ". . . if our Party propaganda for some reason or other goes lame, if the Marxist-Leninist training of our cadres begins to languish, if our work of raising the political and theoretical level of these cadres flags, and the cadres themselves cease on account of this to show interest in the prospect of our further progress, cease to understand the truth of our cause and are transformed into narrow plodders with no outlook, blindly and mechanically carrying out instructions from above—then our entire state and Party work must languish. It must be accepted as an axiom that the higher the political level and the Marxist-Leninist knowledge in any branch of state or Party work, the better and more fruitful will be the work itself, and the more effective the results of the work; and, vice versa, the lower the political level of the workers, and the less they are imbued with the knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, the greater will be the likelihood of disruption and failure in the work, of the workers themselves becoming shallow and deteriorating into paltry plodders, of their degenerating altogether."

It is our lesson too. A great lesson. We must raise the political and theoretical level of our people. We must *saturate* all our work with the ideas, ideals and principles of our ideology. We must close the gap between politics and ideology, between practical political work and theoretical work.

Tactically: The Party's main political line, as formulated by its Tenth Convention and developed since, is proving its correctness, vitality and effectiveness day by day. Ever larger numbers of people are recognizing this fact. But here too the Party faces and tackles new problems.

It is evident that the course of political development since our Tenth Convention, in America and in the world, has proceeded on the whole in accord with our analysis. Moreover, our activities and struggles for the main line of the Party among the masses—the democratic front as the beginning of a development towards an anti-fascist people's front—have

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contributed much to promote this democratic front process and to strengthen the people's resistance to the reactionary offensive. But a number of weak spots have been indicated.

The struggle for the unity of labor is meeting increasing sabotage from the reactionary splitters in the A. F. of L. Executive Council in conjunction with the monopolies and the dominating forces in the Republican Party. *To break that sabotage in the shortest possible time is the central need of the moment.* Furthermore, the political self-activity of the masses themselves is seriously lagging, as pointed out by Comrade Browder in the May meeting of our National Committee. This lag is to be attributed primarily to lack of systematic united action on the part of the *leading forces* of the democratic front process and also to the lack of sufficient realization by the masses *themselves* that they have not only a right to demand jobs, security, democracy and peace—as they do—*but also a duty to fight unitedly for these demands.*

Moreover, labor's initiatives in the consolidation of the democratic front forces are also seriously lagging. It cannot be assumed that just so long as Green-Woll-Hutcheson & Co. stand in the way of labor unity, there can be no effective united labor initiatives by the C.I.O. and the progressive-New Deal forces in the A. F. of L. and in the Railroad Brotherhoods.

Many beginnings of this sort are taking place continually—in defense of the Wagner Act, in the struggle against the Woodrum wreckage of the Relief Act, and on many more issues. This shows that it can be done, but it must be done in wider scope to bring labor forward as an influential force in cementing the democratic front for victory in 1940. These are some of the tactical lessons from the experiences of the recent period, especially with the last session of Congress. John L. Lewis' magnificent action at the hearing of the House Labor Committee indicates the lines of such initiative.

Some of these lessons have special validity in the struggle against fascist aggression and for peace. Here the progressive and New Deal forces in the labor movement have shown a most deplorable lack of activity, let alone initiative. And this at the time when the majority of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L., in violation of the decisions of its own conventions, has thrown its support to the pro-fascist "neutrality" positions of the reactionary employers, viciously sabotaging world trade union unity.

This special question, the lessons of the struggle for peace, should be studied with particular attention in the book by Earl Browder *Fighting for Peace,* just published. It not only contains a review of a most eventful year in the fight against fascist aggression but also profound analyses of policies, tactics and perspectives. It is therefore a most effective handbook and guide to the fundamental issues of the struggle for peace. We shall need that guide in the crucial months to come.

And so, in the field of tactical questions, we are facing the need of examining thoroughly the *weak spots* in the democratic front process and to do all we can to place the task of eliminating these spots before the working class and its progressive allies.

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Organizationally: It is unquestionable that problems of Party building are receiving today more concentrated attention than ever before by the Party organizations and the membership. And from this, good results are bound to flow. Especially so as the approach to solving the newer problems of Party building—to adjust the daily work of the branches and membership to the new tasks and mass relations—has been found and methods of organized activity are being developed.

This being the case, what is evidently needed in greater measure is more patience and persistence in the application of the policies and methods already formulated, and greater creative self-activity by the membership of the Party in the further development and concretization of these policies and methods.

It can be safely assumed that, if this is followed out in the organizational field, going hand in hand with strengthened activities and struggles in the ideological and theoretical field, accompanied by successful efforts to realize more effectively and fully our line among the masses in the tactical field—as all of this becomes more *integrated* and *persistently* prosecuted, we shall have laid the basis for a significant advance in Party growth and influence, opening up with the celebrations of our twentieth anniversary.

And on the question of raising the quality of our work, the resolution of the Tenth Party Convention on "Party Building" has given us the correct and effective guide. It said:

> "All leading committees of the Party are charged with the task of strengthening their collective work and leadership, of improving their Bolshevik self-criticism, overcoming all remnants of sectarianism in the application of the Party's correct united front and people's front policy, at the same time guarding against all tendencies to keep the Party at the tail end of the mass movements, avoiding moods of self-satisfaction, welding still more firmly the unity and discipline of the Party, and developing alertness and vigilance on all problems affecting the life of the Party and of the mass movements. It is absolutely necessary to insure a collective friendly discussion of all differences that may arise on political or tactical problems in order rapidly to overcome them. The leading bodies of our Party have the task to assimilate and master more consciously and systematically the lessons of Comrade Stalin's leadership so gloriously exemplified in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and its world-historic achievement of building the socialist society."

A. B.

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SOME REMARKS ON THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE C. P. U. S. A.

BY EARL BROWDER

THE twentieth anniversary of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. occurs at a moment of world and national crisis. At such moments advanced mankind instinctively turns to a re-evaluation of its history, of the road by which it came to the crisis facing it, in order the better to equip itself for the impending struggles which will determine future history. It is thus no mere formal duty if we, on our anniversary, turn our attention more seriously than ever before to a consideration of the history of our Party.

It was more than ninety years ago when Marx and Engels penned their famous phrase—"a specter hovers over Europe, the specter of Communism." Since that time Communism has grown into a world movement of decisive importance for every country. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union has come to power in a federation of nations, one-sixth of the earth, has successfully founded the first socialist society, establishing an invincible stronghold in a hostile world, and is now proceeding to take up the tasks of the transition to communism.

The United States has been, for some generations, the land of the most advanced capitalist society. But for a long period the labor movement lagged behind that of the other capitalist countries. This was especially true of the political movement of the working class, and of its highest expression, the socialist or communist movement. It is only in the last twenty years that there has been an American party expressly basing itself upon Marxian theory, and only in the last decade that this party has come to play a sustained and important role in the life of the country.

In approaching the task of working out a detailed and systematic understanding of the history of the U.S.A., of the labor movement, and of the Socialist and Communist movement, specifically of the Communist Party of the U.S.A., we have received a highly important stimulus and help in the recently-published *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*. This great book, the highest expression and epitome of the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, will more and more prove itself an invaluable guide to the mastering of the problems of American history also, in the course of mastering Marxist-Leninist theory in practice.

There is, of course, no cheap and easy parallel to be drawn between Russian and American history, whether of the country, of the work-

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ing class, or of the Communist Party. Indeed, these two countries, despite most significant similarities and harmonies, seemed to stand at opposite poles of historical development over a long time. No, it is not in the mechanical translation of Russian experience to America, but in the mastering of the theory which brought the Party of Lenin and Stalin to its eminence of achievement, that the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* will serve the American working class.

This article is but one of the preliminary steps toward a full analysis and exposition of our history upon Marxist-Leninist lines. It is a series of suggestions, which must be submitted to the most searching examination, correction, elaboration, and confirmation, in the course of writing the authoritative history of our Party.

THE PRE-WAR LABOR AND SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

American labor has a long and rich history. Its militancy is comparable with that of any country. It made profound contributions to American democracy. It produced many powerful and selfless leading personalities, as well as great mass movements. Yet for many generations it lagged behind other advanced countries in political and intellectual development, and is only beginning to achieve its independence as a self-conscious and directing force in the national life. The full elucidation of these positive and negative features of the American labor movement, with the tracing of their historical roots, poses the central problem of working class and Communist history in America up to the World War.

The pre-war history falls quite naturally into several distinctive periods. These may be briefly characterized as follows: (1) From the beginnings of trade union organization, in the 1820's, through the Civil War and Reconstruction period; (2) the Knights of Labor movement, its struggle with the rising American Federation of Labor, and its decline, through the 1880's; (3) the early American Federation of Labor, up to the turn of the twentieth century; (4) from the early 1900's up to the World War, the rise of the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.), in 1905, the dominance of "pure and simple trade unionism" in the A. F. of L. (comparable to Russian "economism") symbolized in the Civic Federation, organ of collaboration between labor leaders and monopoly capitalists.

Socialist or communist development for these periods may be briefly described as follows: (1) Utopian socialist and communist colonization schemes and philosophies; the first beginnings of Marxian thought through German immigrants; (2) the struggle between anarchism and Marxism; the American groups of the First International; (3) the rise of the Socialist-Labor Party, and, in the West, the Social-Democratic Party; (4) the Socialist Party, split from the Socialist-Labor Party and amalgamated with the Social-Democratic Party, its rise as a mass movement under Debs, its crystallization around two conflicting tendencies, vaguely identified as "Right" and "Left" wing; the first mass circula-

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tion of Marxian classic literature.

In the beginning of the modern organized Socialist movement in the U.S., its relations with the trade unions were close and harmonious. Even Samuel Gompers, who later became the traditional "socialist eater" as head of the A. F. of L., was trained in a Socialist environment, and for a time worked in harmony with the Socialists. Later, in the closing years of the nineteenth century, the Socialist-Labor Party entered into a disastrous factional struggle with the trade union leadership, under the inspiration of Daniel De Leon, on the issue of De Leon's demand for mechanical control of the trade unions by the Socialist-Labor Party, and for the party's direct representation in trade union councils. It was largely this issue that precipitated the split in the Socialist-Labor Party which gave birth to the Socialist Party of America, under the leadership of Hillquit, Debs and Berger.

But if the Socialist-Labor Party, under De Leon, had committed fatal mistakes of rigid, doctrinaire, sectarianism, the Socialist Party, under the dominating influence of Hillquit, adopted an equally disastrous policy of "neutrality" on trade union questions, a policy which liquidated the influence of the Socialist Party in the basic organizations of the working class. If Hillquit thought thereby to fill the gap between party and trade unions caused by De Leonism, he miscalculated. The Socialist Party attained a relatively stable influence primarily in those unions which it had been primarily instrumental in founding—the needle trades unions of New York, where the workers had brought a socialist consciousness and training from their lands of origin, to a great extent from Russia.

This illustrates the contradiction which runs throughout the pre-war history of American working class political and trade union organizations. All efforts to develop a principled policy and leadership, based on class-consciousness and a vision of the historic mission of the working class, were wrecked by sectarianism, rigid and mechanical dogmatism, which quickly divorced the movement from the masses; the efforts to regain a base among the masses, and to deal with daily life in a realistic manner, quickly degenerated into unprincipled opportunism (which always remained narrowly sectarian) and the liquidation of the party as the true expression of the working class in its historical development.

Clearly, what was missing in the American working class and Socialist movements was the type of leadership which Marx and Engels had provided to the First International; which Engels gave to the first period of the Second International; which Lenin gave to the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (Bolsheviks), and to the Communist International; the type of leadership which Stalin has provided to the C.P.S.U. and the international movement after the death of Lenin. What was missing was the revolutionary theory, and the Party that embodies that theory, as founded by Marx and Engels and developed by Lenin and Stalin.

A characteristic of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, that dates from the Communist League of 1848 and the *Communist Manifesto,* and is the

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hallmark of scientific socialism or communism, is the "struggle on two fronts," simultaneously against Right and "Leftist" deviations from the correct policy, against opportunist abandonment of fundamental principles for supposed "practical" advantages, and against sectarianism, against disdain of the daily small problems of the working class, against anarchist tendencies, and against revolutionary romanticism. Such "struggle on two fronts" against the two fatal sicknesses that attack all working class movements was never attained by the pre-war Socialist movement in the U.S., because it had not learned the lessons of European experience, and did not produce great enough minds to master and generalize its own experience. The pre-war Socialist movement failed for lack of Marxian theory, without which it is impossible to create the "new type of party" which is necessary for the realization of socialism, the greatest revolution of all history.

Of course, the Socialist Party did produce strong individual leaders, but they failed because they were not closely bound into a collectivity, based upon a deep common understanding and the profound faith to which it gives rise. Therefore, strong leaders tended to create divisions and factional tendencies, instead of the monolithic party unity that Lenin and his co-workers created. The problem of unity became a problem of unprincipled compromises between conflicting leaders, and of blocs of special interests. Thus, when the Socialist Party began to grow rapidly just before and during the World War, its ranks became a veritable Babel of confusion in ideology, and the stronger it grew in numbers the weaker it became in inner cohesion. It tended more and more to become a mere electioneering combination of the most disparate and ideologically conflicting groups and tendencies. That the Socialist Party, even in its heyday, produced not a single piece of literature of lasting significance is sufficient commentary upon the sterility of its inner political life, which is the inevitable consequence of lack of Marxian theory, the lack of any understanding of dialectical materialism in its dominant leading circles and party education.

Such was the condition of the socialist movement in America when the World War and then the Russian Revolution struck it with stunning force, transformed overnight the political situation in which it operated, and revealed the inevitable helplessness of any working class party in a revolutionary situation when it is not equipped with Marxism-Leninism. The old Socialist Party never recovered from the blow; the most it could contribute to history was to give birth, through a split forced by its dominant leadership, to the Communist Party, in September, 1919.

THE AMERICAN SOCIALIST PARTY AND THE WORLD WAR

The World War revealed the bankruptcy of practically all the European Socialist Parties, comprising the Second International, which fell apart at the first touch of war. Only the Bolsheviks, under Lenin's guidance, pursued a clear and consistent line. Recognizing the alignment as one of aggressive imperialism on both sides,

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Lenin charted the course of "revolutionary defeatism" which led to the October Revolution of 1917. All other Socialist Parties became patriotic agencies of their governments, except those of Italy and the U.S., which adopted a formal course of opposition but in practice fell into confusion. There were, of course, groups within many parties (*e.g.*, Liebknecht and Luxemberg in Germany; Bulgaria, etc.), which approached Lenin's position, and which later contributed to the founding of Communist Parties.

The American Socialist Party did not attempt to answer the question of its war policy until 1917, in the same month the U.S. entered the war. In special convention in the city of St. Louis, it patched up a compromise resolution opposing American entrance into the war, but failing to indicate any line of action for the masses. The weakness of the St. Louis Convention was but the inevitable consequence of its whole history, the absence of a consistent Marxian theory, and indeed of any consistent ideology. Its opposition to the war remained without any serious influence upon the working class, nor indeed did it give direction even to the Socialist Party itself.

At least four distinct ideological currents combined to determine the anti-war resolution at St. Louis. The pro-war Socialists, headed by John Spargo (today a rock-ribbed Republican reactionary in Vermont); Chester Wright (then editor of the New York *Call*, Socialist daily, and since then in the personal service of Gompers and William Green); and William English Walling (shortly before a super-Leftist), had dramatically made their exit from the Socialist Party under the direction of Gompers, without much influence among the Socialist Party membership. The St. Louis Convention, therefore, had no open pro-war influence to speak of. But the anti-war delegates were far from any unified opinion.

There was, first of all, the tendency of American isolationism, the middle-western Populist influence, which on purely empirical and separatist grounds, opposed American intervention. Secondly, there was a strong trend of Christian-Socialist pacifism, which later came to dominate the Socialist Party through the person of Norman Thomas. Thirdly, there was a pro-German influence, which, from long dependence upon the leadership of the German Social-Democratic Party, concluded that German victory would best serve the world Socialist movement. And, fourthly, by no means the dominant tendency, was the revolutionary socialist influence, striving toward but not yet clearly understanding the position taken by Lenin and the Bolsheviks in Europe.

Two outstanding figures in the Socialist Party tried heroically to lead their party into a revolutionary struggle against the war. They were Eugene V. Debs and Charles E. Ruthenberg. Just before going to prison for his anti-war struggle, Debs dramatically exclaimed, in a public speech: "I am a Bolshevik from the crown of my head to the tip of my toes." Ruthenberg later became a leading figure in the formation of the Communist Party and was its first General Secretary until his death in 1927; with him went most of those who actively fought against

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the war. Debs, held back by his own lack of Marxian theory, isolated in prison and after his release by sickness, and repelled by the manifestations of "infantile Leftism" in the confused formative period of the Communist Party, never made the transition to the modern Communist movement, although by temperament and instinct he fully belonged with it.

The October Revolution in Russia brought a wave of mass enthusiasm among the workers and of rapid growth to the Socialist Party. The writings of Lenin began to appear in English, in imperfect and sometimes even distorted translations, but of a most profound influence. A period of intense study and furious discussions ensued. Theory became a matter of pre-occupation on the part of thousands and tens of thousands. Marxism was discovered by the American movement. A revolutionary wing took shape within the Socialist Party, quickly obtaining the allegiance of the great majority of its membership. The call for the founding of the Communist International appeared. The Left wing in the Socialist Party organized itself in a National Conference early in 1919. At first the Socialist Party leadership maneuvered with the issue; but, finally, under the influence of Hillquit, it took its stand against the Russian Revolution and against the Communist International. Abandoning all pretense of majority rule within the Socialist Party, it expelled the organizations representing the majority of the membership, right on the eve of the national convention called in Chicago. Thus, the split in the Socialist Party was forced by its leadership, and the Communist Party was born in Chicago, on September 1, 1919, with little preparation, very chaotic organization, and a minimum of mature and tested leadership or program.

THE FIRST DECADE OF THE C.P.U.S.A.—1919-1929

It is convenient to deal with the first decade of Communist Party history as a *single period,* because the entire ten years was dominated by the basic problem of the creation of a "party of the new type," basing itself on Marxism-Leninism, beginning the mastery of theory and its independent application to American problems and conditions.

Throughout these first ten years, the Party's development was hampered and distorted by alien and hostile influences working within its leadership. These influences, in the course of these years, finally crystallized into two definitely counter-revolutionary and anti-Communist groups. First was the Trotskyites, followers and adherents of Leon Trotsky, represented in the U.S. by James Cannon, Martin Abern and Max Schachtman. Second was the Lovestone group, followers and adherents of Bukharin, represented by Jay Lovestone, Bertram D. Wolfe and Ben Gitlow. It was not until 1928 that the Party gathered enough internal strength and cohesion to throw off the Trotskyite group; and 1929, when it cleansed itself of the Lovestone group. Until then, these two groups worked in a conspiratorial manner within the Party leadership, creating confusion and political deviations, organizing factional struggles, and keeping the Party in turmoil and separated from

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the American masses and American life.

This decade covered the first two periods of post-war world history; first, the period of post-war crisis, upheavals and revolutions, up to 1923, and second, the period of temporary and relative capitalist stabilization, that continued until the outbreak of the great economic crisis of 1929.

In the U.S. the period immediately following the war was also one of deep disturbance and conflicts. Great strike movements took place, and serious political unrest swept the country. But the Communist Party was unable to play any decisive role as yet. It had not attained even the organizational unity of all important groups which declared their adherence of the Communist International. The "party of the new type" was as yet only an aspiration, a desire, something to be achieved, but it did not exist in concrete American reality. In September, 1919, at Chicago, the party had been "born as twins," known as the "Communist Party of America" and the "Communist-Labor Party of America"; the cause of this division was only incidentally ideological differences. Besides the general political immaturity of the movement, and the confusion prevalent at the time, the division must be ascribed primarily to the existence of the national group Federations, as the most powerful organizations among the expelled Socialist Party membership; the Federation leadership, forming the Communist Party of America, was quite rigid and doctrinaire in political and organizational questions, and repelled those forces which formed the Communist-Labor Party of America, who were less politically educated but in closer contact with the broader American masses. Both groups were necessary to the formation of an effective Party, but neither had leadership sufficiently mature to solve the problems of unity at the moment. Both groups suffered seriously from "infantile Leftism" and revolutionary romanticism.

These "normal" difficulties were multiplied, and confusion was confounded, when the infamous "Palmer raids" of January, 1920, fell upon the infant parties like a thunderbolt. The first great modern "red scare" had swept through the ruling class, as a result of the great strike movements of 1919, which synchronized with revolutionary upheavals in Europe. Notwithstanding the almost complete isolation of both the infant Communist Parties from these mass strike movements—neither of them exercised any important influences either on the initiation or conduct of these strikes—the fear and wrath of the employers born of the strikes and the unstable world situation were all concentrated against the two young parties, which were identified with "foreign-born" and "alien" groups.

A gigantic scheme for mass deportation of all foreign-born Communists was hastily conceived, and launched by Attorney-General Palmer in simultaneous "raids" all over the country, timed at a common hour of the night, arresting thousands of known or suspected Communists who were torn from their families and thrown into immigrant detention stations for indefinite periods, subject to purely administrative handling. Although Labor Secretary Post, technically the

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final authority on deportations, labored seriously to introduce some sanity and humanity into the problem thus created, the "red scare" hysteria whipped up by both Republican and Democratic politicians in the hope of capitalizing it for the 1920 Presidential elections, or at least with the idea of preventing the other side from monopolizing and using the "red" issue against them, overbore all liberal influences and counsels. Federal and state legislation and prosecutions multiplied. Not since the days of John Adams and the infamous "alien and sedition laws" (1796-1800), had anything like it been seen in America. It should be called to the attention of timid New Dealers that the Palmer "red raids" were not unconnected with the Republican victory in 1920.

The divided and unorganized Communist groups were scattered. All their immaturities and romantic tendencies were multiplied and emphasized by the official hysteria and persecution. They "went underground" to escape the constant harassment of "red raiders," and began a slow and painful process of secret gathering of the Party members, hidden away from the forces of persecution, as well as the almost totally inexperienced organizations knew how to hide, which turned out to be not very effective.

It is of tremendous significance that these terrific assaults could not destroy the Party. But there is little value in tracing the tortured experiences of the "underground" days through their details. What is important is that the indestructible elements of the Party existed and worked. The underground days ended in 1922, when the Communists were brought together again in an open, legal, political party under the name "Workers' Party of America" (December 25, 1921), which also amalgamated the "Workers' Council Group" which had remained with the old Socialist Party until that time; as well as significant groups from the S.L.P. and the I.W.W., and, more important, the trade union groups around William Z. Foster, who entered the Party leadership.

The Workers' Party was the first united organization of the American Communists; it was a sharp break with the romantic "Leftism" of underground days, for which it accepted no responsibility; and it established the first American affiliation to the Communist International as a "fraternal" affiliate not subject to the organizational rules then being applied in the Communist Parties in Europe. (The "underground" parties had declared their adhesion to the Communist International but had not been accepted, due to their splits and immaturity). There has never been any formal change in this relationship between the American Party and the Communist International, the close relationship between which have not been based upon formal statutes and rules.

In making available the lessons of the broadest international experience, in the first place, the tremendous achievements of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union which is successfully building the new socialist society embracing one hundred and seventy million population and one-sixth of the earth's surface, the Communist International has played and

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continues to play a great role in the development of the Communist Party of the United States. It is precisely this education in internationalism which has enabled the C.P.U.S.A. to become organically American, rooted in the American soil and tradition, and understanding American problems and history in a deeper sense than they have ever been probed before. Both Lenin and Stalin, besides the contribution to the American workers made by their leadership of the Soviet Union, have by direct expression of opinions contributed inestimably to the mastering of American problems. Of this contribution I have written in more detail previously.

From the founding of the Workers' Party until 1929 was the period of the famous Coolidge-Hoover "permanent prosperity," the illusions of economic grandeur of American capitalism, the fantastic stock market and land booms, the erection of the great Tower of Babel that collapsed with such destructive effects in the crisis of 1929. Within the labor movement it was marked by the rise of illusions of the working class entering into partnership with capital, through labor banking, efficiency engineering (B. & O. Plan), profit-sharing, etc., while extension of the labor movement and the fight for better conditions was largely abandoned. Labor leadership was dominated by extreme reaction. The Communists were swimming against the stream; they found but few and unstable allies among labor organizations with whom it was possible to cooperate during that period. On the whole, with certain necessary reservations, regarding short intervals, it was a period of isolation for the Communists, in spite of strenuous efforts to broaden the field of cooperative and united front action which was the declared policy of the Party from 1923.

In three fields of activity the Communists in this period made significant contributions to the labor movement and gained immense and invaluable experience. These were: the movement for industrial unionism (through amalgamation of the craft unions), various big strike movements that arose against and in spite of the reactionary union leaderships, and the political movement toward a labor or farmer-labor party. In the field of anti-imperialist struggle, and of struggle for Negro rights, the Party made constant efforts, which left their impress, and laid the basis for the permanent achievements of the next period.

The chief problem of the period, in the sphere of internal Party development, was that of transforming the Party from a federation of national group organizations to a uniform party structure uniting all its members in a centralized and democratic organization on a territorial sub-division basis. This problem, inherited from long years of a wrong organizational practice in the old Socialist Party, was a stubborn one, and proved amenable to final solution only with the cleansing of the Party from Trotskyites and Lovestoneites.

This whole period of Party development was distorted and slowed up by chronic factional struggles, originating in the leadership and spreading to involve the whole membership. Two major groupings crystallized,

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forming around two main leading figures, Ruthenberg and Foster, which came to be identified by their names. The Ruthenberg group, on the whole, had experience and contacts mostly from the Socialist Party; the Foster group was, by and large, the most typical American, with the broadest mass experience and contacts, and was especially marked as practical trade union workers. Clearly, a healthy party development called for the fusion of these two groups, and not their crystallization as rivals for party leadership. But for a variety of reasons this did not take place. One contributing factor was the growth of objective difficulties, the apathy of the main labor movement, and the isolation of the Party. More important, however, was the sinister and hostile manipulations, within the two major groupings, of two small secret cliques, headed respectively by Cannon (Trotskyite) and Lovestone (Bukharinite). Every promising beginning of united collaboration of the main Party forces was always wrecked on their separate and joint conspirings. Until 1925 each operated through one of the main groups; at the end of that year they combined, at the climax of a factional struggle, jointly to seize a decisive place in the leadership independently; and on the death of Ruthenberg in 1927, Lovestone assumed his place through a system of unprincipled deception and combinations.

But the Party was far from being the mere passive victim of a little group of unprincipled leaders. Political education and mass experience had already, despite all negative features of Party life, gone so far that no little clique could long dominate the main body of the Party. In 1928 the membership and leading forces so overwhelmingly repudiated the Trotskyites, that even Lovestone and his group found it expedient to go along in cleansing them from the Party. Some years after he publicly repented of that "moment of weakness," and apologized to the Trotskyites for it, when he was again making one of his periodical coalitions with them. The next year, 1929, Lovestone and some two hundred of his personal following were expelled from the Party, following the revelation of his project to seize control of Party property when he had been defeated in the Central Committee.

This was the period when the capitalist world was approaching the turning point of the 1929 crisis. The Soviet Union, preparing its First Five-Year Plan of socialist industrialization, had been forced to meet and defeat the attacks of the Trotskyites, and then that of the "Right" Bukharinites, and later the combined forces of both. Similar groupings took place throughout the world, including within the C.P.U.S.A. In America the issue took place on the estimate of the character of the period of Herbert Hoover, elected to the Presidency in 1928. Lovestone took over Hoover as his guiding star; he predicted that his regime would become known in history as the "Hooverian Age," corresponding to the "Victorian Age" of Britain, the time of unexampled expansion and prosperity. Bertram Wolfe wrote a programmatic article, entitled "A Program for Prosperity," based upon a supposed necessity for the Communist Party to adjust itself

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to the "permanent prosperity" promised by Hoover.

Against this vulgar philistinism, the most active Marxian students in the Party raised the alarm, and pointed to the gathering signs that the Coolidge-Hoover boom was nearing its peak, and that its collapse would fully involve the U.S. in the impending world crisis. At the Sixth Party Convention, in March, 1929, Lovestone maintained himself in the leadership by unparalleled deception, assuring the Convention delegates that, whatever their individual opinions might be, he had the weight of Communist world opinion behind him, and the full support of the Communist International.

A few months later, when the Party learned of his deception, the same Central Committee elected at the Sixth Convention overwhelmingly repudiated him; when he tried to seize the Party property to override the Central Committee, the Committee expelled him and his followers from the Party. In October, 1929, a few days before the great stock market crash, the Central Committee met and adopted a resolution predicting the crisis, calling upon the Party and the working class to prepare for the life-and-death problems that would ensue. Before all the Central Committee members had time to return to their homes, the crisis had broken over the country.

THE MATURING OF A BOLSHEVIK PARTY —1929-1939

Entering the crisis period, the Party was basically united for the first time in its history. Its enemies were on the outside, not within its ranks, and the Party sailed into the storms of the crisis boldly, beginning to gather its fundamental political experience that made it a factor in the national political life. The struggle for its basic clarification had left the Party, however, with but 7,000 members in 1929, of whom around 1,000 had been members since the beginning in 1919. It still carried a heavy baggage of sectarian practices and pre-conceptions, which it had to struggle against, and which it finally threw off only in the period of the Seventh World Congress in 1935, with the full development of the policy of the People's Front.

During the three years, 1930-32 inclusive, the Party was a major factor in two fields of mass struggle and organization, and participated in a third; it initiated the unemployed movement, it threw all its strength in support of the independent unions and their strikes that arose as a result of the complete passivity of the established trade unions, and it participated in the initiation and conduct of the veterans' bonus movement and the famous "march on Washington" in 1932.

The Party directly called and organized the national demonstration of the unemployed, on March 6, 1930, which brought a million and a quarter demonstrators into the streets of American cities. Up to that moment, the press and all other political organizations had united in denying the existence of any significant mass unemployment and suffering. These demonstrations smashed that pretence, and established the issue of unemployment in first place in national life; they gave rise to the first moves for independent organization of the

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unemployed. At a Party Conference called in April to discuss the results of March 6, it was agreed that the Party could not continue directly to lead the unemployed, and the suggestion was thrown out that the unemployed should immediately proceed to organize themselves into Councils.

In July, 1930, the first National Conference of Unemployed Councils was held, which organized the struggle for relief in all the major centers of the country. The Unemployed Councils organized the great "Hunger Marches" to Washington in 1931 and 1932. These Councils continued for six years, until 1936, when they merged with all other similar organizations in the country, to form the present Workers Alliance of America.

Throughout 1930, the Party was discussing the demand for unemployment insurance. The A. F. of L. was openly opposed to such a measure, and no other organization took up the question seriously. Finally, early in 1931, the Communist Party itself formulated a Draft Law for a system of unemployment insurance, and secured its introduction in Congress by Representative Lundeen of Minnesota (Farmer-Labor), the same who, as Senator, is today voting on most major issues with the reactionary coalition in Congress. Around the Lundeen Bill, a broad movement arose in the trade unions, organized around the A. F. of L. Committee for Unemployment Insurance, which finally forced the A. F. of L. to reverse its former stand, and come out in favor of the principle of such insurance. The United Mine Workers was the first great trade union to endorse unemployment insurance.

It was, without doubt, the broad mass movements of the unemployed councils and for unemployment insurance, from 1930 to 1935, which laid the foundation for the New Deal measures of social security and relief.

From 1929 to 1933, despite the passivity of the official labor movement, strikes and organizing movements broke out more and more among the employed industrial workers. With the labor officials ignoring or sabotaging these movements, it was inevitable that independent unions should arise. These efforts were fully supported by the Communist Party, which used its influence to unite their forces in the Trade Union Unity League, established at a conference in Cleveland in 1929. The unions affiliated with this center conducted a very high proportion of all strikes of this period, trained a large number of trade union organizers, and established some stable organizations. Its membership, however, never rose above a quarter-million.

The T.U.U.L. had voted to associate itself on a world scale with the Red International of Labor Unions. However, its constituent organizations never acted on this affiliation, and it was cancelled formally in 1934.

In 1930, the Party began its historic work of penetration of the old South, always before that time neglected by the socialist movement.

With the beginning of 1933, at the depths of the economic crisis, the New Deal was inaugurated in the U.S., almost simultaneously with the rise of Hitler in Germany. The new period of wars for imperialist redivision of the world, already initiated in 1931 by the Japanese seizure of

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Manchuria, had now definitely opened up for the whole world. In the first period of the New Deal, the Communist Party viewed it with the deepest suspicion, considering it but a camouflage for reaction. This suspicion was fed by the vociferous support of Wall Street to the President, and by the role of such men as General Hugh Johnson, of Blue Eagle fame, as head of the N.R.A., who did not hide his admiration of Mussolini nor his basic fascist tendencies. It was further strengthened by the concessions to monopoly capital, by the reliance upon dollar-devaluation as the basis for the first New Deal, and by the policies of restriction of production and destruction of commodities. Within the first New Deal phase, only the famous Section 7a, of the National Industrial Recovery Act, guaranteeing the workers' right of organization in unions of their own choice, clearly pointed the road of the further development of the New Deal; but even on Section 7a, there were two interpretations, General Johnson and Leo Wolman attempting to transform it into a means of fostering a semi-company unionism.

From 1933 to 1935, accompanying the economic revival stimulated by Roosevelt's policies, and assisted by the legal establishment of the right of collective bargaining, a great mass movement of trade union organization began. By 1934, this was already fundamentally changing the situation that had given rise to the independent unions of the T.U.U.L., and in 1935 the Communists joined full-heartedly in the movement to merge these independent unions into the A. F. of L., within which a militant wing was arising of mass proportions. By the middle of 1935, these amalgamations had been large completed. The trade unions were growing by some million new members. At the end of 1935, those forces in the A. F. of L. largely instrumental in the great forward movement, had united themselves in the Committee for Industrial Organization (C.I.O.), with the program to complete the organization of the mass production industries, which the reactionaries controlling the A. F. of L. Executive Council were attempting to halt.

Beginning with the Party's Eighth National Convention, in 1934, was launched our systematic campaign to revive American revolutionary traditions, and for rediscovery and re-evaluation of American history in general. This played an enormous role, not only in the further development of our Party, but for the whole country. The literature on this subject is so widely distributed, and of such recent date, that it is familiar to all our readers, and needs no detailed examination in this brief article.

Toward the last half of 1935, great realignments crystallized in America and on a world scale. The Soviet Union, having successfully established the collectivization of agriculture, and launched the Second Five-Year Plan, had begun to expose and destroy the conspiracy of the "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites," in the service of the fascist powers, that had culminated in the assassination of Kirov in December, 1934. Italy had launched its war to destroy the Ethiopian state. The Popular Front had been formed in France, and checkmated the first fascist attempts to dominate that coun-

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try. Hitler had reoccupied the Rhineland with his military. The Soviet Union was actively cooperating in the League of Nations, while the fascist axis powers were withdrawing from it. In the United States, the "national unity" around the Roosevelt Administration had been broken, by the emergence of the *Liberty League,* representing Wall Street and the "sixty families," with a fierce assault against the President. The Communist Party, foreseeing a basic shake-up and realignment in the political life of the country, began searching for possible co-workers and allies, under the slogan, revived from former days, of the Farmer-Labor Party; and began discussions with the Socialist Party, which culminated in the big debate with Norman Thomas in Madison Square Garden.

The Seventh World Congress of the Communist International took place in the late summer of 1935. The historic report of George Dimitroff, placing clearly the perspective and tasks of the People's Front against fascism and war, for the Communists of the entire world, fitted with the utmost precision the situation of the United States. Our own Party's experience and line of development had contributed to the results of this Congress, and in turn were enormously stimulated by it. The Party made a tremendous step forward. A great historical turn had been made.

Early in 1936, the Communist Party officially participated in a national conference of Farmer-Labor Party forces, called in Chicago by the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota, under the leadership of the late Floyd B. Olson, Governor of the state, who had played the dominant role in the rise of his party to power. That conference decided, with the concurrence of the Communists, that the situation was not ripe for launching a national Farmer-Labor Party, because the progressive and labor movements were inevitably going to support President Roosevelt for re-election in their overwhelming majority. The Communist Party, while retaining grave reservations toward Roosevelt, whose previous course had been at least ambiguous, agreed that the main task in 1936 was to defeat reaction at all costs, as represented by the Liberty League and Republican Party, and that its own course should be directed toward cementing general progressive unity, while maintaining its own complete independence. The Communist Party conducted its 1936 election campaign, organized at its Ninth Convention, under this general orientation, with considerable success, which won it a host of friends and sympathizers, and opened many doors to future collaboration with sections of broadest labor and progressive movements.

Since the purpose of these brief remarks on Party history are to relate the present period, which opens in 1935, with the origin, background, and early history of the Party, the outline of dates, events and issues may well conclude with 1936. This background will greatly deepen our understanding of the historic significance of the Party's Tenth National Convention in 1938, which resolved all unclarities, and in the new Party constitution fixed its character as the democratic party of the working class, continuing the best American tradi-

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tions while preparing for the socialist future.

SOME GENERAL REMARKS AND CONCLUSIONS

What is the picture we obtain from this review of the development of the Communist Party?

It is the process of gathering together a body of men and women who are in ever closer contact with and participation in the life and struggles of the masses of the people, voicing their demands and grievances, and pointing the road of organization and struggle by which alone these demands can be realized and grievances remedied; who are constantly making clear the inter-relation between the particular and the general, the local and the national, the national and the international, and deepening the masses' understanding of their world; who are persistently and systematically educating the masses in the nature of the future society and its inevitable rise, preparing the people for their next historic step forward in the mastery of their own life. The Party embodies all this; without the Party, there would only be so many individuals, with all their limitations, with little more significance than any other equal number of individuals. As the Party, working as a united whole, upon scientific principles, and drawing upon the accumulated wisdom of mankind, this collection of individuals multiply their power in geometrical ratio, and become a significant and inescapable national political force even while the Party is still quite small.

We have not the slightest desire to exaggerate the strength of our Party. Indeed, we have recently been accused of belittling our strength, of desiring to hide it, for fear of frightening our enemies. Mr. George Sokolsky, who has carved out a highly remunerative career as writer and idea-man for employers' organizations, recently accused the Communists of having a truly enormous, even dominating, influence in the country, and hiding it by talking about how weak we are. But in truth, our course is to try to estimate our strength *accurately*, neither to exaggerate nor to underestimate it. We must not exaggerate it, for if we do we will surely undertake tasks beyond our powers of fulfillment, we will bite off more than we can chew. We must not underestimate it, because that will cause us to lag behind the current of history, to pass up our opportunities of achievement, to miss the boat. We must have *accurate knowledge* of our own strength as well as of the world about us and its historical development.

From this historical sketch we also see quite clearly that the Communist Party was not suddenly invented by some bright young man. It grew up out of years of struggle and experience, participated in by hundreds of thousands and even millions of people. Its building was an arduous and difficult task, and it is only well begun. On our twentieth anniversary we are only reaching our first hundred thousand members.

We are not at all satisfied with our rate of growth. But neither are we impatient. We know the deadly dangers of impatience and the desire to find historical short-cuts to our goal, of substituting wishful thinking for scientific objectivity. We have seen

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what happened to the Socialist Party in the past few years, under the impatient and confused leadership of Norman Thomas, and we have no desire to emulate its rapid scattering of a once great political capital, like a drunken profligate getting rid of several months' wages in a single night. We are patient, but not self-satisfied; we know that Rome was not built in a day, and that the Party which will lead the American people to socialism must be tempered and tested in years of struggle. We set ourselves the task to win the respect and allegiance of the majority of the American people, as the precondition for socialism in our country. We have complete confidence in our ultimate success.

Many important phases of our Party's history have not been dealt with here, both strong and weak items in its work, because of the necessity of brevity and because they will be dealt with elsewhere. But even if only to mention, we must speak of the Party's role in the struggle for Negro rights; the Party's contribution to the rise of a great united mass youth movement in America; its contribution to hammering out a clear peace policy for the United States, and the creation of a mass movement in its support; the Party's leadership in the struggle against the threatening rise of intolerance, of a new "Know-Nothingism," of anti-Semitism, of anti-Catholicism, of anti-Negro cults; its leadership in the revival of the American revolutionary and democratic traditions in all their richness, purifying the conceptions of Americanism and of "the nation." We must mention the glorious history of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion in the fight for the Spanish republic, to which our Party gave more than a thousand of its best sons who rest in Spanish soil. We must mention our growing collaboration with the Communist Parties and democratic movements in the Latin American countries and of the Philippines. These essential features of our Party, of fundamental importance, we can no more than mention here, to register that their role is an indispensable part of our history, for understanding our ties with the masses.

Nor would even the briefest review of our history be acceptable, that did not mention our Party's study of the agrarian problem, of its participation in the struggles of the farmers and agricultural workers, and of our basic programmatic task of welding the forces of the workers and toiling farmers to defeat monopoly capital; to which must be added the observation that this, as the weakest phase of our Party's work, is today the subject for special concentrated attention.

The Seventh to the Tenth Conventions of the C.P.U.S.A., taking place in 1930, 1934, 1936 and 1938, each made lasting contributions to the American working class and to our Party history. The Eleventh Convention in 1940 will register a higher point in Party history.

The history of the C.P.U.S.A. is, on its twentieth anniversary, the history of the creation of a Bolshevik Party within the stronghold of world capitalism, the history of the emergence of the American working class as a self-conscious force in American life, the history of the preparation of the American people for struggle against fascist world-conquest and imperialist war, the history of the first stage in preparing America for socialism.

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TWENTY YEARS OF COMMUNIST TRADE UNION POLICY

BY WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

Ever since our Party was formed twenty years ago, the Communists in the trade unions have carried on an indefatigable struggle to build the labor movement into a powerful and progressive instrument in the hands of the working class. During the whole period the Communists have been in the front line of every struggle for better wages, shorter hours, improved working conditions and against the speed-up; they have fought for industrial unionism, trade union democracy, the organization of the unorganized, national and international trade union unity, and a progressive trade union leadership; they have worked tirelessly for the organization of women, youth, Negroes, and foreign born; and they have struggled against bureaucracy, incompetency, racketeering, gangsterism and every form of corruption and reaction in the unions. The Communist trade unionists have carried on a resolute fight for the rights of the Negro people; against imperialist exploitation in Latin America; for the recognition of the Soviet Union by the United States government; for the defense of Tom Mooney, the Scottsboro boys and J. B. McNamara; for unemployment, old age, accident and sickness insurance; and for many other political demands of the masses. They have stood in the van in the struggle against fascism and for peace. Communist trade unionists have always carried on a policy of class struggle, fighting ceaselessly against capitalist illusions among the masses and against the class collaboration policies of reactionary labor leaders, urging alliances with other progressive forces, popularizing the lessons of the great October Revolution, developing the class consciousness of the workers, helping to educate and lead the masses in organized political action, and propagandizing for the principles of socialism.

This Communist trade union program has varied and grown with the changing economic and political situations and with the developing consciousness and organization of the masses. Its successful application in the class struggle, under conditions of the deepening general crisis of capitalism, has necessitated Leninist flexibility and a constant evolution of tactics and methods. Communist trade union policy may be roughly divided into three general phases, namely; those of the Harding-Coolidge post-War period (1921-29), the Hoover crisis period (1929-33), and the Roosevelt New Deal period.

At its birth in 1919 the Communist Party inherited the dual union policy

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that had long characterized the revolutionary wing of the Socialist Party and other Left movements. This dual unionism, which persisted for a full generation, had led to the formation of many independent general industrial organizations, such as the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance (1895), the Industrial Workers of the World (1905), the Workers International Industrial Union (1908), and a score of other individual unions. Its general effect was to separate the revolutionary and most progressive workers from the masses in the conservative unions and to isolate them in small, sectarian unions. This, of course, played into the hands of the Gompers bureaucracy which dominated the broad labor movement.

The Communist Party was in existence only a year or so when it came to understand the folly of the dual unionism which had afflicted the American revolutionary movement for so many years. In this clarification process a big role was played by Lenin's famous pamphlet, *"Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder,* which was directed against similar ultra-Leftist errors in many countries. Consequently, in 1921, the Party, condemning dual unionism, decided upon a policy of helping build and develop along progressive lines the conservative A. F. of L. and railroad unions. To carry this line into effect the Party gave its active support to the Trade Union Educational League, the already existing organization of militants within the old unions.

THE HARDING-COOLIDGE PERIOD

The T.U.E.L. was born in Chicago in November, 1920, as successor to the Syndicalist League of North America (1912-14) and the International Trade Union Educational League (1915-17). The United States at the time, on the eve of the Harding-Coolidge regime, was in the midst of the greatest series of strike struggles in all its history. During the war the workers had greatly strengthened the trade unions, pushing their frontiers into many hitherto open-shop industries: meat-packing, steel, lumber, ship-building, heavy metal, etc. Hence, the A. F. of L. in 1919 reached 4,160,348 members, the highest figure it has ever attained. The workers also had boosted wages and widely established the eight-hour day. The employers, to check the wave of war-time organization and to retard the rise of progressive tendencies in the labor movement, initiated a big growth of company unionism, tied the trade union leaders up with class-peace support of the war, and busily sowed illusions among the masses to the effect that after the war a beneficient era of cooperation between capital and labor would be instituted.

Hardly had the war ended and the country sunk into the first post-war industrial crisis, however, than the employers, repudiating their rosy war-time promises to labor, assailed the trade unions in a bitter wage-slashing, union-smashing offensive. The strikes, marked with violent attacks by the employers and the use of troops against the workers by the Harding-Coolidge governments, raged from 1919 to 1923, in nearly every principal industry—steel, meat-packing, marine transport, automobile, coal, textile, clothing, railroads, building, printing, and others. U.S. Department

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of Labor figures show that no less than 8,335,191 workers participated in these historic strikes. The conservative and reactionary leaders of the A. F. of L. and railroad unions retreated before the fierce employers' offensive. Drugged by war-time class collaborationism, saturated with corruption, and handicapped by obsolete craft unionism, they permitted the bravely fighting workers to suffer defeat upon defeat and led them into one surrender after another. The trade unions in meat-packing, lumber and steel were completely destroyed and those in many other industries were seriously weakened. Altogether the unions suffered the greatest defeat in their history; the A. F. of L. lost about 1,000,000 members and a general worsening of conditions for the workers occurred everywhere.

The newly-formed Communist Party, struggling to establish itself in the face of severe police persecution, was able to play a serious role in the latter part of the memorable 1919-23 strike movement. In the unions it also became the political leader of the struggle against Gompersism, a position once held but long since abandoned by the Socialist Party. The Party gave active support to the T.U.E.L. By the middle of 1922 the T.U.E.L. had become a real factor in the great battle of the workers to save their unions and wage standards. Its fighting program centered around three main slogans: Amalgamation, labor party and recognition of Soviet Russia, slogans which corresponded to the most urgent and immediate requirements of the workers.

The amalgamation (industrial union) slogan expressed the burning need of the workers for greater solidarity and a more militant leadership in the current great strikes; the labor party slogan was in response to the workers' necessity for united political action against the hostile Coolidge government, and the slogan for recognition of Soviet Russia reflected the deep influence the great Socialist Revolution in Russia was having upon the American working class.

These three main T.U.E.L. slogans, which the Party actively supported (there were also other slogans for organizing the unorganized, against imperialism, for Negro rights, for unemployment insurance, for defense of political prisoners, for world trade union unity, etc.), were a clear call to solidarity and action in the midst of the prevalent bitter struggle, which was being so badly led by the trade union bureaucracy. The workers rallied to the T.U.E.L. in great numbers and it began to exercise real mass influence in many strikes, especially in the national 1922 coal strike, when its efforts prevented the traitor Farrington from breaking the strike by making a separate agreement for the miners of Illinois. The T.U.E.L. was an important factor in the big Chicago building trades strike and also in the national strike of 400,000 railroad shopmen during the same year, when its broad amalgamation campaign, endorsed by a large majority of all the organized railroaders, had a markedly stiffening effect upon the workers' ranks. In the big needle trades' strikes and various other struggles of the period the Party forces also played an important part.

By 1923, when the Coolidge industrial boom was already well under way, the T.U.E.L., actively backed by the Party, succeeded in making its

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three major slogans central issues in the labor movement and thereby gravely embarrassed the Gompers bureaucracy. The amalgamation movement, officially sponsored by the Chicago Federation of Labor, the T.U.E.L.'s principal stronghold, ran like wildfire among the organized workers. Soon nine international unions, seventeen of the largest state federations of labor, scores of central labor unions, and thousands of local unions—by computation more than half of the total trade union membership in the United States and Canada—endorsed the T.U.E.L. amalgamation, or industrial union resolution. The labor party campaign, in which the Party played openly a big role in alliance with the Chicago Federation of Labor, also struck root far and wide among the unions. It was indorsed by many hundreds of thousands of workers and became an important factor in creating the mass sentiment that resulted soon afterward in the independent presidential candidacy of La-Follette in 1924, when he polled 4,826,382 votes. The movement for recognition of Soviet Russia likewise received wide endorsement in the trade unions. Indeed, we calculated that the majority of the delegates at the Portland, 1923, convention of the A. F. of L., represented organizations that had endorsed Soviet recognition, although the labor bureaucrats, who dominated the convention, ignoring the mandate of their membership even as they did in the case of amalgamation and the labor party, voted down the recognition resolution.

As we have already seen, organized labor suffered a very serious setback in the great 1919-23 strikes. The weak, newly-organized Communist Party was not able to crystallize its broad mass influence and to overcome the retreat policy of the Gompers bureaucracy, in which the already decaying Socialist Party participated. The weakened trade union movement, as the Coolidge prosperity boom developed in the 'twenties, sank into a morass of class collaboration, outstanding features of which were organized cooperation with the employers to speed up production, a big growth of labor banking and employee-stock buying, widespread persecution and expulsion of Left wingers from the unions, suppression of trade union democracy, adoption of no-strike policies, euphoniously called the "New Wage policy" and the "Higher Strategy of Labor," and an unparalleled spreading of capitalist illusions among the workers by many of their official union leaders. The general consequence of all this was that the morale of the organized workers fell to a very low level, the unions lost heavily in militancy, their strategic positions in industry were seriously narrowed down, and for the first time in their history they did not increase their membership during a period of industrial upswing. All these factors together tended to cut down the mass influence of the T.U.E.L., as well as to weaken the position of the Party.

In the "prosperity" years following the huge 1919-23 strike wave, the T.U.E.L., although suffering much isolation from the masses, nevertheless led a number of very important mass union struggles. Among them was the fight against the B. & O. no-strike plan in the Machinists Union, culminating in the 1925 union elections in which the official returns

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(obviously falsified) gave Johnston 18,021 and Anderson (progressive candidate) 17,076. In the Carpenters Union election of 1925, the T.U.E.L. candidate was officially credited with 9,014 votes against 77,985 for Hutcheson. Then there was the several-years-long T.U.E.L. fight against the coal operators and certain conservative influences in the Miners Union. In 1924, the T.U.E.L. candidate, G. Voyzey, a Communist, polled 66,000 votes—or one-third of the total cast—in the United Mine Workers of America elections. Then came the Save-the-Union movement of 1926-28, during which John Brophy, the progressive candidate in the union elections, polled 60,661 votes. And eventually there was the holding of the big rank-and-file miners' convention in Pittsburgh on April 1, 1928 (during the great 1927-28 coal strike), at which the 101,000 workers represented were definitely following T.U.E.L. leadership. During this period there were also several big struggles in the needle trades where at least 100,000 workers were supporting the T.U.E.L. program, including such important strikes as those of the 35,000 cloakmakers and 12,000 furriers in New York in 1926. In the textile industry also the T.U.E.L. led a number of important mass movements, among which were the hard-fought Passaic strike of 16,000 workers in 1926, the famous Gastonia strike of 1929, and an active participation in the strike of 25,000 New Bedford workers in 1928. There were various additional T.U.E.L. mass struggles of lesser importance in other industries during the latter 'twenties.

Communist trade union work in the whole T.U.E.L. period naturally suffered from the fact that the Party membership in those years averaged only about 10,000, of which hardly more than one-third were trade union members. Then there was the fierce inner-Party factional fight which raged from 1923 to 1929 and which crippled all the mass activities of the Party. To numerical weakness and factionalism was added the further serious handicap of sectarianism. The Party, although it had eliminated dual unionism, anti-parliamentarianism and other sectarian tendencies shortly after its foundation, had not succeeded in wiping out altogether the sectarian evil. Sectarianism especially manifested itself strongly in the latter part of the T.U.E.L.'s life by tendencies, through the adoption of ultra-revolutionary programs, etc., to accept and rationalize the relative isolation from the masses forced upon the T.U.E.L. during the Coolidge boom, the drift of the trade union leadership to the Right, the growth of gangsterism in the unions, the decline of trade union democracy, and the wholesale expulsions and persecutions then being experienced by Communists in the labor movement.

The T.U.E.L. at its foundation had the generally correct policy of a united front between the Left and progressive forces, and all its successful mass struggles were conducted on this basis. Sectarian tendencies, however, plus the trend of the progressives towards class collaborationism during the Coolidge boom, operated to undermine this sound united front policy and to drive a wedge between the Communists and the progressives. This naturally weakened the Party's and the T.U.E.L.'s connections with the masses. Especially did

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such isolation take place as a result of the ill-fated split with the Fitzpatrick forces at the Labor Party convention in Chicago in July, 1923. Towards the end of its life the T.U.E.L., so far as its actual membership was concerned, became pretty much a body of Left militants.

The T.U.E.L. was a minority opposition movement and its structural form was the organized non-dues-paying group of Lefts and progressives in the respective unions. Considering the state of the trade unions and their leadership at the time, this was, in general, a correct and historically justified type of organization. Its main weakness was, as already indicated, sectarian tendencies to narrow the movement down by the adoption of Leftist programs.

The T.U.E.L., especially in its first years, played an important role in the American labor movement. Notwithstanding the numerical and other weaknesses, the T.U.E.L. led many big strikes and other mass movements. It was through its struggles that American Communists got their initial mass experience in the class struggle and first made their influence felt in the labor movement. As such, this period occupies a very important position in our Party's history.

THE HOOVER CRISIS PERIOD

During the Hoover regime the Communist Party trade union policy expressed itself mainly through support of the Trade Union Unity League. The T.U.U.L. was based upon the formation of independent industrial unions, although it also cultivated Left-progressive groups of the old T.U.E.L. type within the A. F. of L. and railroad unions. The first of the new industrial unions took shape during 1928; but the T.U.U.L. proper was not founded until September 1, 1929, when, in Cleveland, it was established by a reorganization of the T.U.E.L. at the latter's fourth national conference. The Trade Union Unity League, with its main stress upon independent industrial unionism in contrast to the minority opposition group that was the form of the T.U.E.L., represented an important development in Communist trade union policy.

A number of interrelated factors led to the formation of the T.U.U.L. just a few months before the coming of the October, 1929, crisis. First, the A. F. of L. unions, by defeats and conservative policies, had greatly narrowed down their industrial base since the war time, notably in steel, meat-packing, auto, lumber and marine transport, thus leaving vast sections of formerly organized industry practically without any unions. Secondly, the trade union leadership, saturated with the B. & O. plan no-strike policies of the period, paralyzed the action of the craft unions and made them almost powerless to defend the interests of the organized workers. Thirdly, large numbers of Left and progressive workers who opposed the no-strike policy had been expelled from the old unions, including 50,000 New York cloakmakers, dressmakers and furriers. Fourthly, the unorganized workers in many places were calling for unionization, a demand that the old unions did not satisfy.

These several factors combined to provide a basis for the independent unionism of the T.U.U.L. in various industries, even prior to the actual economic crisis. This was especially

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true in industries where the open shop reigned supreme and the workers were totally unorganized, as in the auto, steel, electrical manufacturing and lumber industries. In the coal industry also there was a place for the T.U.U.L. because of the almost complete smashup of the U.M.W.A. in the bituminous regions during the 1927-28 strike; the U.T.W. in the textile industry covered only a small fraction of the workers and left a field for independent unionism; likewise the needle trades provided a basis for independent unionism because of the mass expulsions of Left and progressive workers that had taken place there. Coal, textile and clothing were sick industries, with a serious unemployment which forecast the eventual general economic crisis which paralyzed all industry in 1929. When the great crisis finally descended upon the country a few months after the T.U.U.L. was formed the natural base of the latter was further extended by the urgent need of the workers for an active defense of the wage-and-hour standards and the inability and unwillingness of the A. F. of L. officialdom to give these masses militant leadership.

Although the policy of independent industrial unionism thus had a legitimate base among the vast masses of the unorganized, the prevalent sectarianism seriously distorted the T.U.U.L. by extending the independent unions into industries where the old unions were strong, by making the T.U.U.L. union programs too Left, by confining the T.U.U.L. union leadership largely to Communists, and by seriously neglecting progressive work within the A. F. of L. These negative tendencies crippled the activities of the T.U.U.L. and handicapped its growth.

The principal T.U.U.L. unions were those in the mining, textile, needle, automobile, steel, marine, agriculture, food, and shoe industries. There were also smaller organizations in the tobacco, lumber, furniture, jewelry, and other industries. At its maximum strength, early in 1934, the T.U.U.L. reached a membership of 125,000, exclusive of the approximately 150,000 members in the affiliated National Unemployed Council. The strongest local central body of the T.U.U.L., in New York City, had 65,000 members at its peak. The T.U.U.L., like its predecessor, the T.U.E.L., maintained fraternal relations with the militant labor unions of other countries through the Red International of Labor Unions.

During the five years of its existence the T.U.U.L. conducted many strikes and other struggles. In mining there were the fierce 1931 strikes of the National Miners Union in Western Pennsylvania with 42,000 workers, and Kentucky with 10,000. In the textile industry during 1929-31, there were many small strikes of the National Textile Workers Union in New England, involving about 50,000 workers, besides the Lawrence strike of 23,500 in October, 1931. In the needle trades the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union also conducted numerous strikes, involving scores of thousands of workers. In the auto industry the Auto Workers Union led several struggles, the most important of which were the three Detroit strikes in 1933, amounting in all to 16,000 workers. In steel the Steel and Metal Workers Industrial Union led the fiercely-fought Am-

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bridge strike of 5,000 workers in 1933. In agriculture the T.U.U.L. union headed several of the biggest strikes ever known in this industry, including those of 18,000 Colorado beet workers in 1932, and 18,000 cotton pickers and 6,000 grape pickers in California in 1933. Other important T.U.U.L. strikes were in the shoe, tobacco and marine industries, many of them successful. During 1933 the total number of T.U.U.L. strikers was 250,000. This figure does not take into account the large number of A. F. of L. strikers who were under the influence of the Communists.

Besides these strike activities, the T.U.U.L., with which the National Unemployed Council was affiliated, played a very important role in the great unemployed struggles during the years 1930-33. These movements of the unemployed took the forms of hundreds of local, state and national mass parades, demonstrations and hunger marches, around demands for government unemployment relief and insurance. The national demonstration of March 6, 1930, turned out 1,250,000 unemployed on the streets in the principal industrial centers of the country, including 110,000 in New York and 100,000 in Detroit. The great unemployed movement of these years of the deep crisis, the biggest mass struggle ever led directly by Communists in this country, was a powerful factor in procuring relief and work for the starving unemployed and in making the question of unemployment insurance a burning political issue. It also sank our Party's roots deep among the masses.

The Communist Party, the Y.C.L., the T.U.U.L., and the National Unemployed Council, during this period of militant struggle, faced heavy persecution and police brutality. Union offices were raided, members were blacklisted, and leaders were arrested and deported. Pickets were slugged, gassed and jailed. In several states T.U.U.L. unions were declared illegal. From September, 1929, to March, 1933, according to Labor Research Association figures, 23 workers were killed in T.U.U.L. strikes and unemployed struggles. The A. F. of L. leaders and old-guard Socialists condoned these brutal attacks upon the Communists and other militants that were made by the reactionary employers and Hoover government.

Notwithstanding its weaknesses, the T.U.U.L. exercised a considerable and constructive influence upon the labor movement in its time. Its militant educational campaigns, strikes and unemployed struggles deeply stirred the harassed masses who had been paralyzed by the A. F. of L. leaders' collaboration, anti-militant policies. Historically, the many T.U.U.L. strikes in coal, steel and textile during 1930-32, and especially its three big strikes in the auto, coal and shoe industries early in 1933, were direct forerunners and stimulators of the great strike wave that got under way in the latter part of 1933, which has lasted with varying tempo ever since, and an important product of which is the industrial unionism of the C.I.O.

The vast strike upheaval of the masses which began in 1933 rapidly changed the conditions in the trade union movement that previously had made necessary the independent unionism of the T.U.U.L. In the great struggle the fighting masses broke down the no-strike policy of

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the A. F. of L., infused the unions with a new spirit of democracy and put a stop to the expulsion campaigns of the bureaucrats and the progressive elements. The unions started to do considerable organization work in the industries, and a large section of the leadership began to develop a progressive spirit. In short, the mass struggle gave fresh life to the whole trade union movement.

Quickly sensing the significance of this renaissance in the trade unions, and in order to strengthen this unity of labor, the Communists, together with other progressive forces, worked to bring the T.U.U.L.'s independent unions into the A. F. of L. The T.U.U.L. began in 1933 to merge its unions with the corresponding A. F. of L. organizations, and by March 17, 1935, this process had proceeded so far that, by formal resolution, the T.U.U.L. liquidated itself as a national body.

THE ROOSEVELT NEW DEAL PERIOD

In the six and one-half years of the New Deal the workers of this country have made substantial progress, both organizationally and ideologically. In the 1932 and 1936 Presidential elections, jointly with the farmers and lower middle class elements, they administered resounding defeats to the capitalist forces of reaction; they have in strikes and organizing campaigns extended widely the frontiers of trade unionism and recruited their organized forces up to some 8,000,000 members; they have achieved at least the beginnings of a program of social legislation; they are developing cooperative relations with the farmers and lower middle class; and in harmony with the tendency of the masses internationally, they are moving gradually towards the creation of a great democratic front of all the toiling people against fascist-minded reaction.

The chief expression of trade union progress during the Roosevelt regime is the C.I.O. with its progressive leadership, industrial unionism, active organization campaigns, militant strikes, and intelligent attitudes towards the Negro, youth, social insurance, world labor unity, etc. But the A. F. of L. unions also, despite the reactionary holdback Green-Woll-Hutcheson leadership, have achieved considerable progress during the same period, although in lesser measure and at a slower pace. This progress is evidenced by the greater politicalization of their programs, the abandonment of their no-strike policy, the expansion of trade union democracy, the accomplishment of considerable organizing work, the gradual growth of a younger and more progressive-minded leadership, and the development of a broader international outlook. The danger in the situation, however, arises from the fact that the resistance of the A. F. of L. leadership to the new spirit of progress among the workers has led to an open rupture in the trade union movement.

The recent advance of the trade unions, amounting to a virtual renaissance, has been accomplished by unprecedented economic and political struggles. In these the Communists have played a vital and increasing role. The Communist Party, with its Marxist-Leninist training, has ceaselessly explained to the masses the fundamental meaning of the whole struggle and has clearly placed the

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central issue—democracy versus fascism. In the 1936 Presidential elections our Party, with Comrades Browder and Ford as its spokesmen, threw its entire force into the struggle against the reactionary policies of Landon and the demagogy of Lemke. In all the important A. F. of L. and C.I.O. strikes of the New Deal period—the big coal strikes, the many auto strikes, the national textile strikes, the San Francisco general strike, and many others—Communists have actively supported the unions. Every proposed piece of progressive legislation, upon a city, state or national scale, found in the Communists militant supporters. Communist members of the unions have also been active participants in the great organizing campaigns of the C.I.O., in the steel, auto, textile and other industries, as well as in the lesser organizational work of the A. F. of L. Our Party fought tirelessly to prevent Green and Co. from splitting the labor movement and now it works actively to restore trade union unity. In every important union Communists will be found championing cooperative action between the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. in defense of their immediate economic and political interests, as preliminary steps to actual unity. The Communists have constantly exposed the Trotskyite-Lovestoneite traitors and cooperated with the progressive labor forces to preserve the C.I.O. unions from splits. The Communist Parties in the many countries of North, Central and South America are real factors in promoting hemisphere solidarity of the trade union movement. Our Party, jointly with the Communists in other lands, are militant advocates of world trade union unity by the inclusion of Soviet trade unions into the Amsterdam International. Our Party is also the clearest-sighted advocate of peace through a policy of collective security; the most expert in exposing to the workers every brand of fascist demagogy. It has fought resolutely to combine the workers, farmers and lower middle class into a great democratic front. And ceaselessly it has continued its propaganda among the masses on the necessity of socialism to supersede decaying capitalism.

In the New Deal period, with all its struggles and labor progress, Communist trade union work, successfully struggling against traditional Leftist sectarian tendencies, has naturally taken on new forms and methods. These differ widely from those used in the days of the T.U.E.L. and T.U.U.L. Thus, the general political program of the Party, placing squarely the issue of democracy versus fascism, corrects the sectarian tendencies in the past to underestimate the immediate needs of the masses as the issues of struggle. The Party has also especially made progress in the utilization of American democratic traditions and in linking up the struggle to preserve and extend democracy with the fight to establish socialism, which constitute real advances over previous sectarian attitudes on these matters.

Communist trade unionists, far more than in either the T.U.E.L. or T.U.U.L. stages, now work upon the basis of a broad united front of all progressive elements, including the Catholic strata in the unions. The new spirit of progress in evidence among the workers and also among large numbers of trade union leaders

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in the A. F. of L. and C.I.O., makes such a united front policy both practical and imperative. In innumerable union situations in both sections of the labor movement Communists and non-Communists, in the broad ranks and in the leadership, are working together in fruitful and effective cooperation. If Communist trade unions are to be found in active opposition to such officials as Green, Woll, Frey, Rickert, Wharton and Hutcheson, it is because a fight against the reactionary policies of these people is a fundamental necessity for even the most elementary progress of the labor movement.

The organizational forms of Communist trade union work have changed radically in the present period. Some methods, formerly correct, no longer correspond to the situation in the labor movement. Thus the Party members do not now participate in groupings or other organized activities within the unions. The Party also discountenances the formation of progressive groups, blocs and caucuses in unions; it has liquidated its own Communist fractions, discontinued its shop papers, and it is now modifying its system of industrial branches. Communists function in the trade unions solely through the regular committees and institutions of the movement. The Communists are the best fighters for democracy and discipline in the trade union movement and are resolutely opposed to all forms of group or clique control.

The general position of the Communists in the trade unions, as well as their organizational methods, has changed fundamentally in the present period, as compared with earlier stages in the life of our Party. The Communists in the trade unions are no longer merely an opposition force, as they were in T.U.E.L. and T.U.U.L. years. Today, occupying many official posts in both A. F. of L. and C.I.O. unions and everywhere working in full cooperation with progressive leaders and rank and file, Communists share directly, although as yet usually in a minor measure, in the official responsibility of carrying on the movement. Communists as officers are participating in tasks of policy-making and administration in A. F. of L. and C.I.O. unions on a scale quite unknown in the periods of the T.U.E.L. and T.U.U.L., and they are helping to build the highest type of trade union leadership the American labor movement has yet known. This new leadership, based upon efficient service and democratic responsibility to the rank and file, has broken completely with the many autocratic and reactionary practices which have so long disgraced many sections of A. F. of L. officialdom.

During the past several years our Party and the Young Communist League have experienced considerable growth—both numerically and in mass leadership—while the stagnant little groups of Thomasites, Trotskyites and Lovestoneites hamper, obstruct and try to split labor's ranks. Our Party's growth reflects the general advance of the working class. The Party has become an organization of well over 100,000 strong, with its members realistically and effectively active in every type of mass organization. It has expanded into a serious factor in the American political life. The growth in size and influence of our Party is due in large

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measure to its correct trade union policy, to its self-criticism, to its Leninist flexibility in adopting the immediate demands, forms of organization and methods of Communist trade union work necessary to meet the exigencies and possibilities of the situation. Of course, our Party in this general aspect still displays shortcomings and weaknesses, hangovers of a sectarian character, but they are steadily being overcome.

THE GREAT TASK BEFORE US

In the 1940 Presidential elections the forces of reaction and those of democracy will come to a heavy collision, the outcome of which will be fraught with profound political importance. The big business reactionaries, powerfully organizing their cohorts, are determined to destroy the mass organizations, social legislation, and civic rights won by the people under the Roosevelt regime and thus to open the road to fascism in this country. Victory for them in the elections would deal a heavy blow to popular freedom in the United States and also to peace and democracy throughout the world. By the same token, a victory for the forces supporting the New Deal, besides opening up new vistas of democracy in this country, would have far-reaching progressive effects on the world struggle against fascism and war.

The coming national elections will be the most important since the days of the Civil War, and they will constitute a milestone in the history of the United States. In order that the forces of democracy shall win this crucial election struggle there needs to be a broad democratic front of workers, farmers, professionals and small business people built up. This alliance of the democratic strata of the people, the bulk of our nation, can and must be united around an effective program for national and social security; for jobs, democracy and peace. Necessarily, the organized workers should form the backbone of this great democratic front.

The split between the A. F. of L. and C.I.O., caused originally and continued since by the A. F. of L. reactionaries, constitutes the gravest menace to the vitally essential solidarity of the democratic forces in the elections. Unless it is overcome, it may well be the cause of throwing the elections to the Republican reactionaries. The split not only confuses and divides the ranks of labor, but it also antagonizes the farmers and alienates otherwise friendly middle class elements. The split is, therefore, not simply a trade union question, but a political issue of decisive importance. To avoid a major disaster to democracy in this country, the split must be either completely ended or at least practical political cooperation established between the membership and organizations of the two labor bodies, within the coming pre-election months.

Unquestionably the overwhelming masses of organized labor and of the progressive forces generally throughout the country favor the settlement of the split on a basis which will guarantee the existence and growth of the new C.I.O. unions in the mass production industries, the strengthening of unions in all crafts and trades, and provides a basis for a united political stand against the common enemy. Roosevelt in his unity efforts reflects the desires of the great ma-

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jority of New Dealers in the Democratic Party; Lewis speaks for the solid unity sentiment of the entire C.I.O.; Tobin expresses the unity will of a big majority of A. F. of L. members, and Whitney undoubtedly does the same for the bulk of railroad unionists. The great weakness is, however, that the unity forces in the A. F. of L. do not assert themselves sufficiently, while Roosevelt, Lewis, Tobin and Whitney are not unitedly pulling together. This situation enables a comparative handful of well-entrenched A. F. of L. reactionaries to keep labor divided. There can be no doubt that Green, Woll, Hutcheson and other autocrats in the A. F. of L. Executive Council, by continuing the suicidal split, are attempting to swing the 1940 elections to the Republicans. It is high time, therefore, that the New Deal forces generally—in the Democratic Party, in the A. F. of L., in the C.I.O., in the railroad unions, in the farmers' organizations—get together and, in the name of the preservation of democracy in this country, put an end to the criminal split in labor's ranks by bringing the pressure of the overwhelming majority of the workers and other progressive strata against the reactionaries in the A. F. of L. Executive Council. The fight for trade union unity has become a decisive phase of the fight to defeat the Republican Party and fascist-minded reaction in 1940.

In supporting this all-important struggle for labor unity the Communist trade unionists find their present central task. For twenty years our Party has been educating its trade union members in trade union democracy, in the Marxian principles and tactics of the class struggle and in devotion and loyalty to the working class, and now, in the crucial struggle to heal the breach in labor's ranks, their mettle is being tested. It is the great duty of all Communists to explain to the workers the deadly political danger of the split, the need of overcoming the opposition of A. F. of L. reactionaries, the imperative need to heal the split in order to assure victory in the 1940 elections, and the practical channels along which the unification process can proceed.

By winning the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. unions for parallel policies, by cultivating cooperative actions between A. F. of L. and C.I.O. unions in defense of labor's legislative interests, locally, state-wide and nationally, by incouraging non-working class New Dealers to raise their voices for labor unity, by lending all possible support to the newly-established C.I.O. unions—the Communists can help defeat the splitting policies of the A. F. of L. Executive Council and assist greatly in healing the split in the trade union movement. Our Party is united, strong, healthy and growing. It is now a real factor in the fight for trade union unity and it must become even more so. The achievement of trade union unity, or at least of political cooperation between the C.I.O. and the great body of the A. F. of L. around immediate issues of struggle and in the 1940 elections, would give the labor movement the greatest forward push it has ever known. To help in accomplishing this historic task all Communists can whole-heartedly dedicate themselves while celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the Communist Party.

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THE STRUGGLE FOR THE BUILDING OF THE MODERN LIBERATION MOVEMENT OF THE NEGRO PEOPLE

BY JAMES W. FORD

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

THIS is the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. There is one thing that all fair-minded Americans will agree on: this Party has come forward in the twenty years of its existence as a bold and dependable leader in the struggle for Negro rights, guiding the movement of the Negroes for that equality and freedom which is their just due, according to the traditions and the fundamental laws of the country for which so many have bled and died.

The Communist Party is the most able defender of the people of our country. We mean by this all those who toil to build the nation, whether by manual or brain labor. No Party except the Communist Party can demonstrate that it strives to unite the decisive majority of the population for the happiness and well-being of all, for the best national interests of the country.

One of the most decisive sections of our population is the Negro people. In the building of our country, the Negro people have fulfilled a role in productive labor, heroic struggle, and cultural contribution. They have served the nation well in all past crises and they continue to do so today. The Communist Party alone among modern political parties sees that unless a movement for the liberation of the Negro people is organized, there can be no real freedom for the working class, no security for democracy, and no safety for the nation threatened by reaction from within and without. For twenty years the Communist Party has led an uncompromising fight against all the forces which hindered the rising movement of black Americans. The two main influences which the Party has considered most detrimental to the development of that movement are the presence of white chauvinism among sections of the white working class and tendencies to petty-bourgeois nationalism among Negroes.

The Party's constitution formulates as one of its basic principles the:

> ". . . abolition of all exploitation of man by man, nation by nation, and race by race and . . . the abolition of race and class divisions in society."

Guided by the Marxist-Leninist teachings, the Party has fought tooth and nail to uproot all anti-working class and undemocratic trends and tendencies in the labor movement of the United States.

The Communist Party has won the respect and confidence of the Negro

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people because it has shown in action that this principle is the standard by which the Party must be judged. The whole weight of the Communist Party has been thrown against the enemies of the Negro people, against their oppressors, the monopolists, the bankers, the landlords, and the traitors. Its record of self-sacrificing devotion to the interests of the Negro people has inspired trust among those whose rights were defended. This record has convinced ever larger numbers of white workers and progressives of the need for united struggle with the Negro people. It is this same devotion to the welfare of the Negro people which makes of the Communist Party the target of the heaviest blows from the enemies of the Negro people.

The struggle of the Communist Party in behalf of the Negro people is sure and strong because it is not based on emotion or sympathy, or in any preconceived subjective policy; Communist principles are evolved from the knowledge of the laws of social development. Only a thorough understanding of the forces which drive for social change and of the relationship of the Negro people to those forces, only a thorough knowledge of the heritage of the Negro people, linking present-day movements to the past, can serve as a basis for Communist action. It is this understanding of the social-economic, political, and cultural background of the Negro people in the light of Marxist-Leninist theory which makes the Communist Party, above all other parties, the most consistent fighter for Negro rights.

In the early period the Communist Party was influenced by a reformist-sectarian approach to the Negro question—a hangover from the Socialist Party, according to which the Negro question in the United States would be solved by the proletarian revolution. At most such an approach resulted only in propagandistic condemnation of Negro oppression. Very little practical day-to-day struggle against Jim-Crowism and national oppression was carried on.

In the second period, as the Party began to understand that the Negro question required a special approach, it began to struggle against Jim-Crowism, segregation and race prejudice, but still inadequately: it had not yet understood the full implications inherent in the special approach.

Finally, the international experiences of the Party, derived from its affiliation to the Communist International, aided it in reaching a full understanding of the Negro question as a *national question.* Thus began the transition from narrow sectarianism and neglect to the development of a broad all-inclusive movement for full liberation of the Negro people from the yoke of American national oppression.

This broad approach made possible the struggle which resulted in the freedom of Angelo Herndon, and the four Scottsboro boys—a struggle which broadened the fight against the whole Jim-Crow set-up. Capitalism had developed this yoke of national oppression from the Civil War on. It was necessary therefore to develop within the ranks of the working class, which was the decisive class against capitalism, an understanding of the part that class had to play in the fight for the liberation of the Negro people.

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THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY AND THE RISE OF THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT

The United States entered modern capitalist development and expansion following the Civil War and the abolition of slavery. But the Civil War did not solve the Negro question.

After the Civil War American capitalism expanded and began to assume its role as a dynamic force in the nation. But it began early to sow seeds of reaction in the South. The contradiction in the development of this new rising class was brought on by one of the most shameful betrayals, not only of the Negroes but of the whole people. In the counter-revolution of 1875-77 the Republican Party, the erstwhile party of freedom, the party of the rising capitalist class, re-subjected the Negro people to the domination of their former masters.

The South was still the great agricultural region of the country, peopled by Negro semi-slaves and poor whites. In his valuable work *Capitalism and Agriculture in the United States,* written in 1913, Lenin gave a clear description of how reactionary capital operated in agriculture:

"Capital finds the most varied forms of landed property as they developed during the middle ages and patriarchal times: feudal holdings, 'quit-rent allotments' (*i.e.,* dependent peasant holdings), patroonship and seignorial grants, township land system, state and other forms of land ownership. All these forms of landed property are subordinated by capitalism to its own system, though such subordination assumes various forms and is accomplished by different methods."

Here Lenin showed the economic basis of the betrayal of the Negro people by the Republican Party in the counter-revolution of 1877.

"The American bourgeoisie is not distinguished in this respect from the bourgeoisie of any other country. Having 'freed' the Negroes they took good care, on the basis of 'free' and Republican-Democratic capitalism, to re-establish everything possible and do all in their power for the most shameless and despicable oppression of the Negroes. To describe the cultural level of the Negro it is sufficient to point out a single statistical fact. While the proportion of illiterates in 1900 among the total population of the U.S.A. of ten years of age and over was 6.2 per cent, among the Negroes it was as high as 44.5 per cent! ! More than seven times as high as among the entire population! In the North and the West illiteracy in 1900 amounted to from 4 per cent to 6 per cent, while in the South it ranged from 20.5 per cent to 24.9 per cent One can easily imagine the aggregate of legal and social relationships corresponding to this disgraceful condition in the field of literacy."

The Negro freedmen sought to escape their prison by migration from the South. With this migration, begun in 1879-80, there set in a change in the composition of the Negro people. There began a process of urbanization and proletarianization. As Lenin described the process:

"The Negroes are fleeing from the two Southern divisions where no colonization is taking place. During the ten years from the 1900 to the 1910 census, almost 600,000 Negroes emigrated from these divisions to other sections of the country. The Negroes go first of all to the cities. In the South, 77 per cent to 80 per cent of the entire Negro population live in rural communities, while in the rest of the country only 8 per cent to 32 per cent of the Negroes live in rural communities. There is a striking similarity between the economic position of the American Negro and that of the former serf of the central agricultural provinces of Russia."

In 1879-80 a large number of Negroes migrated from Southern states into Kansas; a second movement took place in 1889-90 into Arkansas and Texas; a third and far-reaching move-

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ment took place almost unnoticed, in 1910, reached its peak during the World War period, and ended in 1923. These movements had the following trends: (a) from the border states of Maryland, Kentucky, Tennessee and North Carolina into the North; (b) a Westward movement into Texas and Oklahoma; and (c) movements from remote farm districts of the South into Southern urban centers, and thence into the industrial North.

An interstate movement of Negroes —migration between typically agrarian states and relatively larger industrially developed states—was already in evidence, in 1870, when 57,443 Negroes born in Mississippi were living in other states, principally Texas. This general tendency was observed as proceeding from the typically agricultural states of Louisiana and Mississippi into the growing industrial states of Alabama, Texas, North Carolina, etc. Therefore, on the basis of this interstate and migratory movement for better economic and social conditions to be found in industrial centers we conclude that the increase in Negro population was a process of proletarianization of the Negro population rather than being due merely to a natural increase, or that the Negro was an irresponsible wanderer, as some "historians" are wont to claim.

The Negroes flowed into every industry—mining, mechanical, manufacturing, etc. The number of Negroes listed in gainful occupations, exclusive of agriculture, in 1920, had reached 2,645,263.

The Negro proletariat did not, immediately upon its development, become an active leading force in the Negro people's movement. Today, however, after two decades of experiences, gained from participation in the organized labor movement, which participation was stimulated and guided by the activities of Communists, the Negro working class is assuming its position as leader in the people's movement for liberation. As evidence of this one need only point to the role played by A. Philip Randolph and the many Negro leaders of C.I.O. unions.

During the period following the Civil War the working class of the United States underwent tremendous growth. The organizations of labor became powerful: great mass struggles and class battles took place, resulting in the achievement of the eight-hour day. The Negro workers were inseparable from these struggles and the organization of the working class. But in the formation of the modern liberation movement of the Negro people little attention was given by the early Negro leaders to the working class movement, largely because the working class as a whole had not matured, and, secondly, because the Negro leaders came primarily from non-proletarian strata.

THE RISE OF THE MODERN NEGRO LIBERATION MOVEMENT

About thirty years ago the modern Negro movements began. The Niagara movement,* founded in 1905, was the forerunner of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, with which it merged in 1909. The Urban League

* So called because Niagara Falls was the city in which the general Negro conference called by W. E. B. DuBois and his immediate followers took place.

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was founded in 1910. The Universal Negro Improvement Association (the Garvey movement) began under the leadership of Marcus Garvey just prior to the World War.

These movements were concerned with important social and economic problems of the Negro people. The Niagara movement and the N.A.A.-C.P. stressed the following issues: suffrage, no discrimination in public accommodations, freedom of social intercourse, intervention of the national government to wipe out illiteracy in the South, equal educational opportunities, equality in the enforcement of all laws, and anti-lynching.

The Urban League began as a job placement and aid bureau of the Negro migrants to the industrial centers and big cities. The Negro Business League, founded by Booker T. Washington, sought advancement for Negroes in business. Booker T. Washington also, around the Tuskegee idea, struggled for mass education of Negroes, particularly the masses on farms in the South.

The Garvey movement had an all-embracing character—liberation of the Negroes of the world, "Back to Africa."

These movements endeavored to solve by reformist methods based solely on "race" the most important and burning problems of the Negroes which had come about as a result of the Civil War and the unsolved problems which it produced. But none of these movements understood the forces at play in the country as a whole that had bearing on the problems of the Negroes, nor the meaning of the rise of American capitalism. Certainly, they showed little understanding of the working class, its rise and organization. They apparently did not understand the fundamental basis, arising out of class relations, for the plight of the Negro people. All of this, of course, was not the fault solely of the organizers of these early movement of the Negro people. Much blame attaches to the labor movement itself, especially its dominant leaders.

The early leadership of the N.A.A.-C.P. was imbued with the "talented tenth" leadership idea, that is, higher education for a chosen few as the leaders of the great masses. The demand for the highest education possible for members of the Negro race was laudable; yet the notion that the "talented tenth" was made up of supermen, handing down guidance from the top represented a harmful petty-bourgeois philosophy.

There was a proletarian development among the Negro people, in embryo certainly, but nevertheless destined to play a major role in the rise of the Negro people's movements. Here was a section of the Negro population that was to become associated with the most advanced class in modern society, the working class.

The Universal Negro Improvement Association, led by Marcus Garvey, demonstrated the willingness and the desire of the people for mass organization, by the fact that it embraced the majority of organized Negroes. But Garvey counselled against collaboration with labor and openly opposed labor organizations among Negro workers, who, in the main, were the basis of his movement. Garvey posed as an internationalist and even quoted Lenin. But his was a narrow "racial internationalism."

Representing the Negro petty trad-

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ing class that had grown up during and following the World War, the Garvey movement was unable to break through the limitations of the narrow petty-bourgeois nationalist outlook, which tended to detach that movement from its natural working class connections and retarded the rise of the Negro proletariat to hegemony in the national liberation struggle.

The fallacy of Garveyism lay in the fact that the national struggles of an oppressed nation cannot succeed in the epoch of imperialism, except through a joint struggle of all the oppressed and super-exploited forces in society led by the working class. Garveyism, chasing the twentieth century mirage of a closed Negro market, was doomed to defeat and demoralization. Thus today Garvey and his followers are the aides of the pro-fascist Chamberlain clique in Great Britain. Moreover, in addition to lack of unity between the Negro people and the working class, there was also the lack of inner unity within the Negro people: each organization chose to foot it alone, indifferent to, if not actually in competition with, the others.

It was left to the Communists, basing their approach on Marxism-Leninism, to begin the movement to unite the Negro people and ally them with the working class and the other progressive and democratic forces.

BEGINNING OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S ACTIVITIES IN THE MODERN NEGRO LIBERATION MOVEMENT

The Communist Party, arisen from the Left wing of the Socialist Party and drawing into its ranks the best elements of the various Marxist groups and militant sections of the Negro people, was the first party to begin to unite the Negro people's movement with that of the working class. From its inception in 1919 the Party raised the slogan of struggle for equal rights for Negroes. But in so doing it had to overcome encrusted opportunism. Following the World War, when the upsurge of the Negro people reached heights never before seen in this country since Reconstruction, the labor movement was dominated by the opportunist Gompers leadership in the American Federation of Labor and the Hillquit bureaucracy in the Socialist Party.

The Gompers-Hillquit leadership was the bearer of white chauvinism in the labor movement; on the other hand, the Negro petty-bourgeois leadership spread distrust in the Negro people's movement against the labor movement and the white workers. The Communist Party had to stem these tides and fight in a difficult situation in order to advance the struggle for unity between Negro and white workers.

In its 1922 convention the Party adopted a program calling for support to the Negroes in their struggle for economic, political and educational equality; for the destruction of the barrier of race prejudice; and for a solid union in struggle against the common capitalist exploiters and oppressors.

Following the World War, the Negroes manifested splendid militancy in struggle. In more than ten American cities the Negro masses took to the barricades defending themselves against armed attacks. For the first time since Reconstruction the Southern countryside flared with mili-

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tant mass action—at Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Elaine, Arkansas. And when it is remembered that simultaneously with these actions the organized workers were engaged in tremendous strike struggles in the steel, meat-packing and mining industries, one gets the background against which the tasks of the young Communist Party arose. Manifestly, a party so recently formed, ideologically still immature, and beset by the notorious Palmer repression, could not have come forward in those days as an influential factor.

This potentially powerful revolutionary sentiment among the Negro people soon fell under the influence of petty-bourgeois utopianism which diverted its power against American imperialism into channels of reformism and of "peace and return to Africa."

In 1924 the Communists took part in the "race conference" of the Negroes in Chicago. This conference was a mixture of petty-bourgeois fraternal and other organizations. Through its delegates the Party submitted an extensive labor program, which was rejected, however, by the petty-bourgeois elements. But the Communists, by this action, succeeded in bringing up boldly the pressing social and labor questions of the Negroes, which were discussed in the entire Negro press.

The Party itself had called a united front conference of Negro organizations in 1923. This conference culminated in the American Negro Labor Congress called in Chicago in 1925.*

During all of this early period the Communist Party was hammering out its program of struggle for Negro rights. At its Fourth National Convention, held in Chicago in 1924, the Party worked out a concrete program for the abolition of all discrimination practiced against the unorganized Negro workers, and for their organization in the same union with white workers on the basis of equality of membership, equality of the right to employment in all branches of industry, and equal pay for equal work.

The Party took up the question of the organization of Negro agricultural workers into labor organizations together with white agricultural workers and to bring such unions into the stream of the general labor movement. Another supreme task undertaken by the Party was to promote the organization of Negro tenant farmers, sharecroppers, and small farmers generally (together with the white farmers of the same exploited class, where possible) and to bring such organizations into cooperation as allies of the labor movement.

All slogans of equality which were current among the Negro masses and which expressed their aspirations for equal rights and equal treatment in social, political and economic life were placed among the demands of the Communist Party: "for political equality, the right to vote, social equality, 'economic' equality, abolition of Jim-Crow laws and also Jim-Crow customs not written into law, the right to serve on juries, the abolition of segregation in schools and the right of Negro teachers to teach in all schools; equal rights of soldiers and sailors in the army and navy without segregation (hotels, theatres, restau-

* For a description of the American Negro Labor Congress see the author's *The Negro and the Democratic Front*, pp. 81-82, International Publishers, New York—*The Editors.*

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rants, etc.), and the abolition of all anti-intermarriage laws." (Resolution of Fourth National Convention of the Communist Party.)

The Party's aim, always in the interests of working class internationalism, was to arouse class consciousness among the Negro toilers and to crystallize this into independent political action together with the white toilers against the capitalist class.

An instrument for advancing this struggle in the trade union movement was the Trade Union Educational League, organized in 1921 and led by William Z. Foster, present Chairman of the Communist Party. The T.U.E.L. became the champion of Negro rights and promoter of the struggle in the trade unions against the white chauvinist Gompers bureaucracy. This fight was illuminated by the experiences of William Z. Foster with Negro workers and their special problems during the great steel strike of 1919 and the packing house strike of 1922. Because of the conditions under which the Left-wing trade unionists had to work at that time the T.U.E.L. activities were mainly agitational and propagandistic. However, the work of the Communists in that Left wing had a tremendous influence in meeting the problems of the Negro workers.

THE NEGROES AND FARMER-LABOR UNITY

In the early period of its existence, when the Communist Party was driven underground, it found a way to agitate for equal rights for Negroes in all working class organizations where it exerted influence. In 1924, the Communists introduced a plank on Negro equality in the Farmer-Labor Party Convention, thereby seeking in the political movement of labor to advance the cause of Negro liberation. The Party worked especially toward ending the disfranchisement of Negroes in the Southern states, to broaden the basis for unity of the Negroes with the Farmer-Labor Party.

* * *

THE MARXIST-LENINIST POSITION ON THE NEGRO QUESTION

In 1928, the Communist Party, guided by the Communist International, came to a full scientific, Marxist-Leninist understanding of the Negro question in the United States, as a national question.

In October of that year, following the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International, the Party adopted a resolution which stated:

> "The various forms of oppression of the Negro masses who are concentrated mainly in the so-called 'Black Belt' provide the necessary conditions for a national revolutionary movement among the Negroes.
>
> "To accomplish this task, the Communist Party must come out as the champion of the right of the oppressed Negro race (nation) for full emancipation. While continuing and intensifying the struggle under the slogan of full social and political equality for the Negroes, which remains the central slogan of our Party for work among the masses, the Party must come out openly and unreservedly for the right of Negroes to national self-determination in the Southern states, where the Negroes form the majority of the population."

The opportunist Lovestone leadership rejected the full implications of industrialization in the country and the development of capitalism following the Civil War. Instead, they preached that the industrialization of the South would "sweep away the

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remnants of slavery," and thus the Negro question would be "solved," or could be put off until the time of the socialist revolution!

Due to conscious distortions which sought to identify this position with reactionary Negro separatism, there was brought in confusion among the Party ranks on the question of self-determination. In the main, however, there was clarity. For, on the question of separatist tendencies among Negroes, the resolution stated:

> "The general reaction of Communists to separatist tendencies among the Negroes . . . cannot mean that Communists associate themselves at present, or generally speaking, during capitalism, indiscriminately and without criticism with all separatist currents of the various bourgeois or petty-bourgeois Negro groups. For there is not only a *national-revolutionary*, but also a reactionary Negro separatism, for instance, that represented by Garveyism."

With clarity on the Negro question from the basic Marxist-Leninist viewpoint, there followed the expulsion of Lovestone from the Communist Party. With the expulsion of the Lovestoneites and the establishment of unity in the Party, the program on the Negro question was cleared of opportunist views. This armed the Party politically for a decisive step forward in organizing the national liberation movement of the Negro masses. With a Leninist-Stalinist line, with unity established in the Party, the attention of the Party was directed towards mass work among the Negro people.

Immediately, the Party heeded the warning of its resolution to conduct "an aggressive fight against all forms of white chauvinism . . . accompanied by a widespread and thorough educational campaign in the spirit of internationalism within the Party, utilizing for this purpose to the fullest possible extent the Party schools, the Party press, and the public platform, *to stamp out all forms of antagonisms*, or even indifference, among our white comrades toward the Negro work."

Attacking white chauvinism within its own ranks, notably and dramatically expressed in the public trial of one of its members in 1930, the Party placed the Negro question before the entire country as a major problem on the agenda of American social and political history. It was this trial which prepared the Party membership and a large section of the American masses for the practical attainment of the objectives set forth in its resolutions.

Grasping a deeper understanding of the Negro people's movement as it relates to the land question, the Communists penetrated the deep South and helped organize thousands of Negroes into the Sharecroppers' Union and other organizations for the protection and extension of their basic rights. Indeed, it was this deepened understanding that made possible the development of the Scottsboro issue into an epic political struggle that stirred America—and the world. This struggle threw the spotlight of world opinion on the lynching and national oppression of the Negroes in the United States and won the support of the entire labor movement and wide sections of the progressive forces, North and South. Likewise, the widely supported struggle for the freedom of Angelo Herndon reaffirmed the legal right of the Communist Party to conduct activities in the South.

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These struggles, occurring in the midst of the great crisis, marked the beginning of a change in class relations within the Negro people. For the first time in history the Negro workers were acting as an independent force, fighting for their own and their people's demands.

Stemming from these struggles were movements for the immediate needs of the Negro people—the right to vote, to jury service, to hold public office; the abolition of the ancient chain gang laws. These movements are today changing the South to the benefit, not only of the Negro people, but of democracy in the entire nation.

The worst sufferers from the world economic crisis of capitalism were the Negro people. Economic insecurity affected whole sections of the Southern population. The pioneering work of the Communist Party to alleviate these sufferings was evidenced by the great nationwide unemployed demonstration held on March 6, 1930. Drawing tens of thousands of Negroes into common economic action with whites, these mass outpourings established the basis for Negro and white labor solidarity, both among the unemployed and in the unions.

THE PEOPLE'S FRONT MOVEMENT AND THE NEGRO PEOPLE

The offensive of fascism, by its hideous racism and its depredations against weaker nations, soon impressed itself upon the Negro people as a menace to their security. Ethiopia, subjected to the savage rapine of Italian fascism, became the focal point of the Negro people's fight against Nazi-fascist barbarism. Bleeding Ethiopia filled them with undying hatred against fascism and its bestiality. Out of this struggle, conducted on an international scale, and which the Communists helped to initiate, grew organizations uniting the Negro people for continued struggle against fascist dangers at home as well as abroad.

The aggressor policy of fascism in Europe, Asia and Africa, as well as its penetration of Latin America, the Caribbean, and the West Indies, has placed the slogan "for the right of self-determination" in a new light. The progressives and, above all, the Communists, must assume the task of preventing the fascists from using this slogan demagogically for reactionary purposes.

Following the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International and the development of a program for the people's front, life itself was already developing, in skeleton form, the Negro sector of this front in America. The Communist Party immediately set its tasks in regard to the problems growing out of the new situation.

The issue now in the world is democracy against fascism. This requires the utmost development of labor unity as a cementing factor in the construction of a powerful democratic front movement—unity of labor, the toiling farmers, the Negro people, and the middle classes against capitalist reaction, fascism and war.

For the Negroes the central task is the promotion of unity around their principal organizations: The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National

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Negro Congress, the Southern Negro Youth Congress, the Urban League and the many other organizations of the Negro people, including the powerful church groups. The success of the movement for unity demands a more intensive mass mobilization of the Negro people, together with their friends and allies, for daily struggle against Negro discrimination—in unions, on jobs, in regard to relief and educational facilities; in a word, for full equal rights. To some extent many far-seeing Negro leaders are beginning to tackle this task; and in most instances their efforts have been rewarded with a ready response of the masses. The first serious effort in this regard was the First National Negro Congress called in Chicago in 1936.

Having acquired experience in, and developed leaders through, the mass work among the Negroes, the Communist Party was able to render valuable aid toward the accomplishment of this task. This aid was expressed concretely in the contributions of the Negro Communists, especially, to the National Negro Congress. In the midst of this broad movement the Communists helped it avoid the pitfalls that had beset previous movements of upsurge. Identifying itself with the Negro proletariat, now risen to a leading position in the people's movement, it assisted the movement in steering clear of narrow racialism and toward a broad unity movement of all the oppressed. Without its contact with the maturing Negro working class this assistance would not have been possible.

The Negro volunteers who fought and died in Spain, and those who are now breaking with the Japanese-inspired "unity of darker races" ideology in giving aid to the embattled Chinese people, are eloquent witnesses to the growth of advanced working class influence among Negroes.

The Communists recognize that the fight for the rights of the Negroes is the task, not only of the Negro people, but of the country's democratic forces as a whole. It is particularly the task of the white working class, whose historic ally in the struggle for its own emancipation is the Negro people.

On the basis of this principle the Communists have consistently conducted the struggle against the anti-Negro prejudices and restriction in the labor movement and the people's organizations. This struggle has borne significant fruit: notably, the C.I.O. program expressed in its convention resolutions calling for full Negro equality. To be noted also is the increased pressure within the A. F. of L. and the Railroad Brotherhoods for the removal of color bars on the job and in the unions.

This trend on the part of labor indicates a process of consolidation which renders more effective its independent role in supporting the democratic front. In this way the labor movement, on the Negro question, as on other economic, social, and political issues, asserts its leadership in the democratic camp of which the New Deal is the political symbol.

This increasing support given the New Deal by labor, and the vital need of that support, brings the consistent New Dealers to realize the necessity for, and actively to promote, the unity of labor and the unity of Negro and

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white. And since Negro and white unity can come about only in the course of removing anti-Negro restrictions, we see the leading New Dealers speaking and acting in behalf of the abolition of these restrictions.

The Communist Party supports the New Deal as the political expression of the democratic front and strives to unite the Negro people's movement with it. The Party points out that in the interest of maintaining the New Deal and democracy against the attacks of the Hoover-Garner forces the people and the government must effectively meet the burning problems which confront the Negro masses. For, with the Negroes constituting the balance of power in at least seven states, their votes will have very important bearings, and even be decisive in the 1940 elections. Therefore, passage of the Anti-Lynching Bill, abolition of the disgraceful poll tax; and amending the Social Security Act, liberalizing the benefit provisions in the interests of Negro domestics and agricultural workers, must become a part of the political program of the New Deal. Independently, the Communists will continue to fight for these demands of the Negro people in the interest of democracy and America's well being.

Under the aegis of the New Deal, the Southern Human Welfare Conference, held in Birmingham, in November, 1938, opened up a new phase of the struggle against the feudal restrictions placed upon the Negro people and the South as a whole. The Southern Negro Youth Conference, following the Human Welfare Conference, disclosed the forces among the Negroes willing and ready to take their places in this basic struggle for democracy in the country. The Communists, through their pioneering work in the South, may justly claim to have laid the foundation for these great social movements. This new phase of the struggle for Negro rights in America, as reflected generally in contemporary social and political life, marks also the transition of the Communist Party from a minority, fighting almost alone on this issue, into a definite part of the democratic majority. No other field of work demonstrates this fact more than the Party's work among Negroes.

New times and new conditions bring new methods of attack and struggle by monopoly capital and reaction against the forward movement among the Negro people. This movement is achieving stability and solidarity. But reaction is resorting to demagogy, deceit, stool pigeons and spies to disrupt and disorganize it. Among the most common types of spies and disrupters are the Trotskyites and Lovestoneites. Types similar to the traitors in the struggles of the Negroes prior to and during the slave period are evident today.

A changed attitude is to be noted in the principal organizations of the Negro people toward labor and the relationship of labor to the problems of the Negro people. Labor organization among the Negro workers has reached heights never before known. An estimated 500,000 Negro workers are now organized into the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. This change offers great hope for the advancement of the modern liberation movement of the Negro people, for their immediate needs and their ultimate freedom.

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THE AMERICAN WOMAN

BY ELLA REEVE BLOOR

THE celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Communist Party brings to our minds many memories of the women of our country, that oppressed social group of our population whose interests have always been championed so staunchly by our Party. The women who are working so bravely and with such self-sacrifice in our movement today are fitting heirs of those hosts of American mothers who have helped to build and improve our country, to achieve our democratic heritage.

WOMEN OF COLONIAL AMERICA

The pioneer mothers, so heroic in their rebellion against the tyranny and oppression of their own lands, sailed away on unknown and uncharted seas in small boats, to find safety and freedom in the new world. Many romantic stories are written by historians about the voyage of the *Mayflower,* and the eighteen wives who accompanied their husbands to the new wilderness which later became the beginnings of the United States.

But the merchant companies that organized these expeditions showed no more regard for the native Indian inhabitants of America than they had shown for the rights of their own workers or womenfolk. Their actions made foes of the Indians, who might be called the only one-hundred-percent Americans. The Indians resented the coming of the "pale-face" to their hunting grounds. They fought the settlers by destroying their log houses, and in some cases by wiping out entire families. Later on, the British government, to prevent Westward migration, incited the Indians deliberately against its own American subjects. Some of the brave pioneer mothers had to escape with their children through woods and valleys to establish homes all over again.

Hannah Dunstan's defense of her week-old baby, during her flight from the Indians through the forest after her husband and her other children had been killed, is commemorated by a statue near Concord.

The shameful subjugation of women that prevailed throughout the world at the time of the settlement of America is revealed by the manner in which the first women were brought to the Virginia colony. They were brought in a special boat and sold at auction for tobacco as wives to unknown men—virtually as slaves.

Our thoughts about the mothers and daughters of America would be incomplete without mention of one or two outstanding Indian women. All of us were told in childhood the story of the young Indian princess, Pocahontas, daughter of the great chief Powhatan, who, while only a girl, saved the life of John Smith by throwing herself upon his head just as

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it was about to be severed from his body. Her record is that of a real rebel, as we read of her being imprisoned in Jamestown, in 1613. About this time, she married an Englishman named John Rolfe, who took her proudly to England. They had one son and together they founded the large family of descendants of Pocahontas in Virginia. One of these families was that of Edith Bolling, who married Woodrow Wilson when he was President of the United States.

Long years after the period of the Indian princess and the Pilgrim mothers, we find Indian women who availed themselves of the government schools and who in a number of instances became brilliant writers. An Indian woman of the Sioux tribe of North Dakota, Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Donnin) contributed many articles to the *Atlantic Monthly, Harpers* and *Everybody's Magazine,* and compiled books dealing with the true character of the lives of the Indian women from childhood to old age. Her touching stories are obviously of her own life as a "Warrior's Daughter." She speaks of her own internal struggles after she had been to the schools of the "Paleface" and had lost faith in the Great Spirit. In her *American Indian Stories* she calls upon the women of America in a stirring passage:

"History tells us it was from the English and the Spanish that our government inherited its legal victims, the 'American Indians,' whom to this day we hold as wards, and not as citizens of their own freedom-loving land. . . . Now the time is at hand when the American Indian shall have his day in court through the help of the women of America. . . .

"Wardship is no substitute for *American citizenship,* therefore we seek his enfranchisement."

As the years passed, the pioneer women grew into proud home-owners, many of them subject to a rigid Puritan regime under which even expressions of affection were regarded as sinful. Their heroic heritage led them to stand beside their men in the period of rebellion against the tyranny of the rulers of England. In that acute crisis in American life which led to the Revolution, the women became real leaders. Three hundred women in Boston, as early as 1770, refused to use any tea shipped from England and helped to unload the famous cargo of tea into Boston Harbor. We feel proud that some of these women were our direct ancestors.

Outstanding revolutionary women wrote and agitated in behalf of the struggle for liberty. During the boycott against British goods, crowds of women at times laid rough hands on the Tories who were selling such goods. There are stories from that exciting period of how Tories were tarred and feathered and ridden on rails by crowds of incensed women.

Some of the women fought at the side of their men all through the Revolutionary War. One distinguished woman, Deborah Sampson, from Plymouth, Massachusetts, fought all through the Revolution disguised in a man's uniform.

Martha, wife of George Washington, encouraged him throughout the darkest years of the war. John Adams' wife, Abigail, in reply to a letter from her husband informing her of the preparations for declaring independence, wrote:

"This intelligence will make a plain path for you although a dangerous one. I could not join today with the petitions of our worthy pastor for reconciliation between our

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no longer parent State—but Tyrant State—and these colonies. Let us separate. They are unworthy to be our brethren. Let us renounce them, and instead of supplication as formerly for their 'peace and happiness,' let us beseech the Almighty to blast their councils and bring to naught all their devices."

The New York Tribune, during Independence Day celebrations in 1875, commented on this letter:

"Here was a Declaration of Independence preceding by seven months that which has become so famous, and it was signed by a woman."

It was a woman, Betsy Ross, who designed the flag of our country.

The American mothers of the Revolution we shall aways remember as bearing the standards and ideals of their forefathers from other lands. The brave colonial mothers forged for the generations of daughters of America an ancestry of democracy. This heritage bore a rich harvest in the years after the Revolution.

WOMEN IN THE CAUSE OF ABOLITION

While the colonies had secured their independence from British oppression, they had a slavery of a kind very hard to overcome on their own shores. While the struggle of the people obtained a Bill of Rights, the rights of citizenship were not extended to women and to the Indians. And the Negroes, who had been taken in slavery, stolen from Africa, brought to this country in slave-ships, and then bought and sold as chattels, of course had no vote.

Prior to and during the Civil War days, great tasks were performed by our mothers, who were stirred by the issue of slavery. It was a woman, Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* aroused the nation and the world in behalf of the enslaved Negro population.

Throughout Pennsylvania and other areas, Quaker women gave aid to the slaves in flight to the North. Most of the older leaders of the woman suffrage movement had been active in the anti-slavery crusades—reformers like Frances Willard, whose statue now stands in the Hall of Fame in the United States capital; the orator Mary Livermore, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

Among the Negro people emerged heroines such as Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, who devoted their lives to the cause of their people and who afterwards helped *all* women in the early days of the women's suffrage movement. Harriet Tubman was known to the slaves as the "Moses of her People." Risking her life, she made repeated trips into the depths of the slave territory and assisted some three hundred slaves to find freedom beyond the Mason-Dixon line.

Side by side with the cause of freedom for the slaves went the struggle for citizenship for women. It took courage in those days even to speak out against black slavery or to advance a proposal that women should have equal rights. Often imprisonment followed meetings held against black slavery or for women's suffrage.

That women were bound to the cause of the Negro people by common ties of oppression was shown by the development of the women's suffrage movement side by side with the movement for granting the right to vote for Negroes in the days following the Civil War. The Reconstruction legislatures in the South, composed of Negroes and poor whites,

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granted civil liberties to Negroes and carried out other progressive acts, such as the foundation of a public school system. These liberties and rights came to an end with the forcible termination of the Reconstruction period.

The Reconstruction legislatures were also aware of the needs of women, as is shown by the fact that legislative measures in their interest were passed by these bodies. For example, the inheritance laws were modified so as not to be unjust to women as in the past, and divorce laws were passed as some measure of protection to wives. These facts should serve to answer those who slander the Negro people by alleging that freedom for Negroes is a menace to Southern white womanhood. It was when Negroes sat in the highest legislative bodies of the South that these reforms in the interest of Southern white womanhood, as well as Negro womanhood, were passed.

The first Negro ever to be nominated for the Vice Presidency of the United States was the great abolitionist, Frederick Douglass. The famous woman's rights leader, Victoria Woodhull, was the Presidential candidate on the same ticket, that of the League for Equal Rights, in 1872.

It was the revolutionary peak following the Civil War, which freed and enfranchised the slaves and extended American democracy to the highest point ever achieved, that gave rise both to the first national trade union movement and to the movement for woman suffrage. Just as the most advanced women were conscious of their common ties with the Negro people, so were many of them conscious of their ties with labor, as evidenced by the membership of American women in the First International and by the fact that Frances Willard, some years before her death, joined the Knights of Labor. Labor, in its turn, was conscious of the need of supporting many of the demands of progressive women, as shown by resolutions which its organizations passed.

CHAMPIONS OF WOMAN'S RIGHTS

Lucy Stone was perhaps the most outstanding champion of woman's rights. She was born in 1818, the eighth of nine children. Her mother, when told the baby was a girl, said, "Oh dear, I'm sorry it is a girl; a woman's life is so hard." She had milked eight cows the night before the child was born. Lucy Stone's daughter, Alice Stone Blackwell, still active in the progressive movement, and now living in Boston, states in a remarkable biography of her mother:

> "No one could foresee that the little girl just born was destined to make life less hard for all the generations of little girls that were to follow."

Those who devoted their lives to the cause of woman's rights form a long honor role of women—Frances Willard, Mary Livermore, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Carrie Chapman Catt, and others.

Well do I remember going to jail in Washington after demonstrations in front of the United States Capitol during Inauguration Week for President Wilson. The day after the inauguration, large crowds of women formed an organized and impressive parade. Thousands of noted women came from all over the country to protest against their continued slavery. The marshal of the day was a young woman who seemed like a flame of

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inspiration to all of us, both young and old—Inez Mulholland. She rode a magnificent horse up and down the line of march to protect the women from the crowd that crushed upon us. The Chief of Police refused protection and we were at the mercy of the mob, inspired by reaction, which insulted and beat us. Our only defense was the women marshals on horseback beside Inez. We saw women, some of them wives of Congressmen, keeping the mobsters at bay with their riding whips. It was a remarkable sight—American women united to seek political freedom.

Many years of struggle have also been spent in the effort to obtain equal rights for women to enter the professions and to secure equal pay for equal work. This is a task which has still not been won in its entirety.

It was this movement which inspired the formation of such organizations as the League of Business and Professional Women. Although a conservative organization, which unfortunately is championing the so-called "Equal Rights" Amendment that would destroy special legislative protection for women in industry, it has often been active in opposing discriminatory actions against women in business and professional life.

Those few women leaders of the early movement for woman suffrage who still live continue their activity in the cause of woman's rights. Carrie Chapman Catt, at eighty, is awake to the dangers for the working women today lurking in such bills before Congress as the "Equal Rights" Amendment to the Constitution, which, under the guise of granting "equal" rights, would abolish all special legislative protection to women.

Many of the daughters of those pioneers of woman's rights are also active today. Alice Stone Blackwell, now eighty-two, is a worthy daughter of her distinguished mother. Her father, Henry Blackwell, and his sisters were earnest advocates of the movement to secure higher education for women. Their championship of this cause opened the way for women in the medical professions. Alice Stone Blackwell, together with Ellen Hayes, professor of astronomy at Wellesley College, were among the first members and active workers in the International Labor Defense; and when Sacco and Vanzetti were executed, Ellen Hayes walked on the picket line around the State House until she was arrested. The morning after the execution, one hundred and sixty men and women were held for trial and fined. Seven men and women would not pay the fine and their trial came to court the following winter. Among them were Edna St. Vincent Millay, Ellen Hayes, William Patterson, Katherine Huntington and myself. We were finally freed by a jury trial. Many other women helped in the historic fight for the two labor martyrs, as they have likewise for Mooney, Billings, MacNamara, Matthew Schmidt, the Scottsboro boys, Angelo Herndon and many others.

It is only natural that among the progressive forces of today we find the direct descendants of the women pioneers for the enfranchisement of their sex, for the liberation of the Negro people, and for the defense of all persecuted champions of liberty.

WOMEN LABOR STALWARTS

The period immediately after the Civil War and Lincoln's death, so full

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of changing industrial and political conditions, saw the development of the use of woman and child labor in the factories. This awakened many women in the United States to the need of industrial organization for women. The textile unions, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union, etc., came into existence after many bitter struggles. The women workers and wives of the workers should be remembered for their militancy throughout our labor history.

The copper miners of Calumet, Houghton, and Hancock, Michigan, will never forget the beautiful Socialist woman leader of the great Calumet copper strike of 1913, facing the soldiers fearlessly, always carrying a huge American flag at the head of the picket line. She was the daughter of a miner and a heroic daughter of America. Her name was Annie Clemence. Those of us who lived and worked with these militant strike leaders remember the heroism of the mothers, wives and daughters of the great Western Federation of Miners who helped to carry on that copper strike for many months. We remember their patient, persistent marching—their resistance to those of their priests who went from house to house pleading with them to send their husbands back to work. All this heroism was unheralded and unsung. Not least among the great gifts these workers have bestowed upon America are their children—men like former Congressman John Bernard, born and raised in the iron and copper country.

Mother Mary Jones, who fought so valiantly for many years in the long, bitter struggles of the miners, is remembered with love and honor by the men and women in the labor movement today. Side by side with her in our memories stand Fannie Sellens, martyr of the steel strike of 1919, brutally murdered; and the youngest and loveliest of all the heroines of labor, the woman who led the Gastonia strike in 1929, always singing songs of victory, shot down by hired thugs as she sang—Ella May Wiggins.

The miners and the labor and war prisoners still remember with love and respect their lawyer and champion, Caroline Lowe, who died only recently in Pittsburg, Kansas. During the days of the World War, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and I were active with her in the leadership of the workers' defense movement. In those days, Kate Richards O'Hare spent a year in the Missouri State Prison for her convictions. There were many effective women orators for the Socialist Party at that time, such as Anna Maley who was the first candidate for governor on the Socialist ticket, running in the State of Washington. Bertha Maley of New York was the Secretary of the Rand School, and was under fire during the entire war period. In the I.W.W., there was Dr. Marie Equi, who spent a year in prison. Louise Olivier wrote a pungent pamphlet against conscription and was sent to a federal prison, the state prison of Colorado being used for that purpose. During my prison visits, I tried to see her and Comrade Flora from Texas, who is still active in the peace movement; but they were held incommunicado.

We do not forget those who have gone from life—Margaret Prevy of Akron, the loyal fighting friend of Debs and the labor movement; Rose Pastor Stokes, our beautiful comrade who died for the cause; Ida Crouch

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Hazlett, a staunch sympathizer of our Party; and many, many more.

During all this time many other women outside the labor movement were working among girls in industry, the professions and business—such women as the famous Jane Addams, founder of Hull House in Chicago. Thousands of women followed her example in settlement houses throughout the country, and in other organizations, such as the Y.W.C.A.

Among the women of today who are outstanding in their devotion to the democratic aspirations of our people, there is the wife of our President, Eleanor Roosevelt. By her speeches and writings and by her championship of progressive movements of great significance for the cause of democracy and peace, she is exerting a notable influence upon the American people as a whole. Of especial importance has been her devotion to the needs of youth and her concern for the Negro people, dramatically evidenced by her stand in regard to the recent discrimination against Marian Anderson by the D.A.R. and by her participation in the American Youth Congress.

Our Party inherits the traditions of all the struggles for women's rights throughout our history. Among our members are to be found women who first came into the progressive movement during some of these great battles of the past. They symbolize the fact that the Communist Party is working to eradicate the very roots of the special oppression to which woman is subjected under capitalism. The finest type of progressive womanhood, working with devotion for the rights of labor, woman, the Negro people, for all mankind, is to be found today within our Party.

However, not nearly enough women have come to us from the older political and industrial movements. Their children? To a far greater degree. But not the army of youth that we should have, and *will* have when our young people are really taught to understand the dangers we face today, the need for the broadest movement to stop the advance of fascism, and their responsibility to the people to help build such a movement for democracy.

My own life has led me all the way from work in the early movement for woman suffrage to work in the Communist Party from the time of its formation until the present. It is a joy during all this time to have known so many glorious women, all working for a better society.

The building of the democratic front in our country draws upon the energies of ever-growing numbers of American women. In the vast new labor movement of our country, the working class women are emerging as a strong force in the women's progressive movements. The twentieth anniversary of our Party should be an occasion for us Communist women to intensify our work of uniting the vast majority of women for the great cause of democracy and peace.

We have before us the great achievements of the women of the Soviet Union, where, for the first time in history, womanhood has been completely liberated from all the shackles of the past and where we see fully that the highest development of democracy involves the complete abolition of all forms of the subjugation of woman. This realization, brought to the millions of American women, will inspire them to greater activities for the preservation and extension of the democratic rights in our own country today.

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FORERUNNERS

(To Commemorate the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the First International and the Twentieth Anniversary of the Communist Party of the United States of America.)

BY V. J. JEROME

IN 1881 Uriah S. Stephens, founder of the Knights of Labor, stated in answer to a question:

"In the course of my travels through Europe some thirty years ago, I made the acquaintance of a certain London tailor by the name of Eccarius. Later on, when I organized the Clothing Cutters' Union of Philadelphia, I received from time to time from the same tailor quantities of agitation pamphlets, among them this *Manifesto*. I had never read the pamphlet before, but I found it contained pretty much everything I had thought out myself, and I used it largely in the preparation of the Declaration of Principles of the Order." *

Stephens' allusions were to Johann Georg Eccarius, for many years a co-worker with Marx and Engels, and for a time Secretary of the General Council of the First International; and to the *Communist Manifesto*.

This obscure statement holds capsuled an important truth of history—the great principle of proletarian internationalism, the indigenous character of Marxism in the labor movement of every country. We see in this the attunement of Communist thought, worked out into a science on European soil, to conditions in the United States, and American labor's natural responsiveness, on the basis of its own class experiences, to the Marxian teachings. The class struggle, and the historic role of the proletariat in it, had only to be pointed out to be recognized—here as there. Marxism is no more alien to the United States because of the historically conditioned German origin of its founders, or the Russian origin of Lenin and Stalin, than is the American Declaration of Independence because of the British origin of John Locke and the French origin of the Encyclopedists.

Today every Munich-man and Fifth-Columnist within our gates cries "foreign Bolshevism," "Moscow gold." These demagogues would have the American people forget the long history and rich traditions of Marxian thought and work on American soil, and what our country has gained from the international relations of the American working class parties and trade union organizations, since the middle of the past century. On the twentieth anniversary of our Party's founding let us demonstrate the role of Communism, in our land and internationally, as the native leader and unifier everywhere of all peoples in their titanic

* Morris Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States*, p. 291.

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struggle for democracy and national security against fascist assailants.

* * *

Marxian influences first manifested themselves in the United States in the early 'fifties, with the tide of political refugees that flowed in from Germany following the defeat of the 1848 Revolution.

American labor was reviving from ravages inflicted upon the trade unions by the crisis of 1837. In the late 'forties a fresh current of trade union organization, both local and national, had set in. It was the opening of a decade of national "Industrial Congresses" with their admixture of trade unionists, land reformers, Owenites and sundry class-"harmonizers"; and of city "Industrial Congresses," in which labor dominated. One of labor's principal slogans of agitation was "the ten-hour day." Strikes for higher wages and a shorter work-day became common in every trade and industry.

Thus, we are told by a historian:

> "In the latter part of 1845 and the spring of 1846, immense mass meetings were held in Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania. In Lowell, Mass., and Manchester, N. H., the town halls were crowded to their utmost capacity. The people seemed to be aroused from their apathy, and public speakers were in great demand. The labor press made an active canvass of the towns for subscribers, publishing letters in which the condition of labor was described." *

It was under these conditions that the ideas of Marxian socialism were first introduced into the trade union movement of the United States. Their pioneer propagandist in this country was Joseph Weydemeyer, who arrived from Germany in 1851. A close friend and adherent of Marx and Engels, he had been a member of the celebrated Communist League, organizational sponsor of the *Communist Manifesto.* During the years 1852-55 this spokesman of Marxism in America was the outstanding figure among the German workers on these shores. In 1852 he launched a monthly publication, *Die Revolution.* Associated with this periodical is a cultural heritage greatly to be valued by the American people. It was in the second and last issue of this New York publication that Marx's classic historical work, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,* was first given to the world.

Die Revolution was succeeded the following year by another Communist publication in New York, *Die Reform,* of which Weydemeyer again was the leading spirit.

Well-grounded in Marxian principles, Weydemeyer realized early that the labor movement among the German immigrants could take root and achieve permanence only if integrated with the working class of the land as a whole. To this end, he and a group of co-workers called a conference of the German trade unions in New York, to meet on March 21, 1853, with the purpose of forming an all-embracing American workers' federation. So successful was that gathering that it gave rise to similar conferences in a number of other cities, with a national federation in prospect.

Eight years earlier, in his *Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844,* Engels had set forth in memorable words the basic political significance of trade unions:

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* George E. McNeill, *The Labor Movement: the Problem of Today,* p. 105.

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". . . what gives these unions and the strikes arising from them real importance is this, that they are the first attempt of the workers to abolish competition. They imply the recognition of the fact that the supremacy of the bourgeoisie is based wholly upon the competition of the workers, among themselves; *i.e.*, upon their want of cohesion. . . . They are the military school of the working men in which they prepare themselves for the great struggle which cannot be avoided. . . ."

Herein is implied the all-important Marxian principle that every class struggle is a political struggle, that the economic organizations of the working class cannot be severed from its political practice. In the First International Marx and Engels battled those false counselors to the working class — Bakuninists, Lassalleans, and traditional British trade unionists — who sought to substitute for that principle opportunist "pure-and-simple" trade unionism. In the opening years of our century, this struggle was resumed by Lenin under new conditions with devastating attack, in his refutation of economism.

In proceeding to build the federation of American workers, Weydemeyer sought to connect the political with the economic aspects of the workers' struggles. He and his associates therefore urged the adoption both of trade union and legislative demands. In this regard *Die Reform* played an important agitational role. Despite considerable opposition at the New York conference, Weydemeyer's platform was finally adopted.

The guidance that Marx extended to his followers in the United States especially in regard to this fundamental is exemplified in his well-known letter to Bolte, member of the Provisional Federal Council of the First International in New York, under date of November 23, 1871:

". . . every movement in which the working class comes out *as a class* against the ruling classes and attempts to force them by pressure from without is a political movement. For instance, the attempt in a particular factory or even a particular industry to force a shorter working day out of the capitalists by strikes, etc., is a purely economic movement. On the other hand, the movement to force an eight-hour day, etc., *law* is a *political* movement. And in this way, out of the separate economic movements of the workers there grows up everywhere a *political* movement, that is to say, a movement of the *class*, with the object of achieving its interests in a general form, in a form possessing a general social force of compulsion. If these movements presuppose a certain degree of previous organization, they are themselves equally a means of the development of this organization."

Due to the immaturity of the labor movement at the time, as well as to sectarian tendencies among the followers of Marx, the federation of American workers did not attain fruition. But those pioneer efforts of Communists, directly connected with Marx and Engels, to combine the foreign-born with the native-American workers and to infuse working class political demands into the trade unions represent precedents of the highest value to American labor today in its struggle for maximum trade union unity and for independent economic and political action.

* * *

In the two days immediately preceding the convention which first nominated Abraham Lincoln for the Presidency, a momentous conference

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was held in the Deutsches Haus,* also in Chicago.

The conference was composed of delegates elected by the German-American Republicans of the entire country, brought together to present to the convention delegates a program which, embodied in the Republican platform, would ensure for that party and its candidate the full support of German-Americans and all other progressives.

There was the gravest danger that an effort to appease the Southern slave-owners by a conservative candidate and platform would be consummated. At that time, the leading candidates for the Presidential nomination were clearly Seward, whose chances were day by day more doubtful, and Judge Edward Bates of St. Louis, whose nomination was strenuously urged by the conservatives. N. P. Banks, later a "political general," was another prospect of the same type.

These two, as well as many of their supporters, had come into the Republican Party as a result of the complete breakdown and discrediting of the so-called "American" Party, which the people scornfully entitled "Know-Nothing."

The German-American voters hated and distrusted this element, and with reason. For it had induced even the Republican majority of the Massachusetts legislature to pass the notorious "Massachusetts Amendment," withholding suffrage from the naturalized for two years.

Most of the two hundred delegates and participants in the conference were "'48-ers" and earlier revolutionary refugees; of signal prominence among these were delegates who were disciples of Marx.

The conference elected Dr. Adolph Douai of Boston, who afterwards became a leading Marxian propagandist, concerning whom more later; and Caspar Butz of Chicago, one of the founders of Deutsches Haus, to prepare a set of resolutions. These were accepted by the conference, and printed immediately, at night, so as to be circulated among the delegates to the convention, which met May 16-18. These resolutions read:

"The German-American delegates to the National Republican Convention are requested to submit the following as the sentiment of the majority of the German Republican voters of the Union and to use all honorable means to secure their recognition in proper form by the national convention, to-wit:

"1. That, while we firmly adhere to the principles of the Republican Party as they were laid down in the Philadelphia platform of 1856, we desire that they be applied in a sense most hostile to slavery.

"2. That we demand a full and effective protection at home and abroad of all the rights of all the classes of citizens irrespective of their descent, that our naturalization laws as handed down by the Fathers of the Revolution and the Constitution are just in principle, and ought *not* now to be changed in a manner that the time of probation for acquiring the rights of full citizenship and suffrage be prolonged, and that state legislatures be prohibited from passing any laws discriminating between native and adopted citizens in regard to the exercise of the right of suffrage, as was intended by the so-called Massachusetts Amendment.

"3. That we favor the immediate passage by Congress of a Homestead Law by which the public lands of the Union may be secured for homesteads of the people, and secured from the greed of speculators.

"4. That the territory of Kansas which now, under a constitution republican in form and expressive of the will of an overwhelm-

* Built four years earlier to provide a forum for the opponents of the "Know-Nothing" Party.

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ing majority of the people, asks admission into the Union, be admitted without delay as a sovereign state without slavery.

"5. We pledge ourselves to support any aspirant for the Presidency and the Vice-Presidency who stands on this platform, and has never opposed the Republican platform of 1856, nor has ever been identified with the spirit of the Massachusetts Amendment."

With an obviously favorable effect on Lincoln's candidacy, the second and third resolutions are identical in content with the resolutions of the Decatur, Illinois, Convention of May 10, controlled by Lincoln's friends, at which his candidacy was formally launched. These and the 4th Resolution formed the backbone of the Chicago Convention's historic platform; the 5th Resolution had served its purpose when Lincoln was nominated.

The resolutions served notice in unmistakable terms that the German-American voters, a large portion of whom were trade unionists, would support only a platform and a candidate that opposed Know-Nothingism and the arrogant pretensions of the slave-owners. Faced with the sharp alternatives, defeat in the election, or meeting the wishes of voters who held the balance of power,* the great convention's willingness to denounce Know-Nothingism in its platform and to select Lincoln as its candidate was re-enforced and crystallized.

Therefore, not only did the vote of the foreign-born elect Lincoln, as Governor Altgeld once proved; but the resolute action of the anti-slavery, anti-discrimination German-American voters, expressed through a representative assembly, setting conditions for the candidacy, led to his nomination.

The bourgeois historians have made Lincoln's nomination a mere matter of vulgar logrolling and wire-pulling; or else a miracle, an accident, something beyond understanding. It is, however, clear that, while the Lincoln-Douglas debates made him available, Lincoln's own political astuteness, his political organization in Illinois, which prominently included German-Americans, and above all the decisive stand of the *conference,* were the major factors in his actual nomination.

Among the delegates to the conference were such an outstanding Marxist leader as Weydemeyer, then editor of *Stimme des Volkes* (Voice of the People), Chicago organ of German-American working men; and Dr. Douai, who had the main hand in writing the resolutions. Other delegates had been representative spokesmen of the Left during the revolutionary struggles in Germany of 1848-49, among them: Dr. Adolph Wiesner of Baltimore and Dr. William Hoffbauer of Iowa, who had represented respectively Vienna and Saxony in the Parliament of Frankfort; August Thieme of Cleveland, who had been a member of the Diet from Saxony; Frederick Hecker, who had been a member of the Baden and Frankfort Parliaments. In the political campaign of 1856 he was Lincoln's running mate for elector-at-large. In the Civil War, elected Colonel of the noted 24th Illinois, he later commanded the 82nd Illinois Regiment. He was not without previous military experience, having been the famed leader of the insurrection of '49 in South Baden.

* The German-Americans could turn the scale "in Missouri, Iowa and Minnesota, in Illinois and Wisconsin, in Indiana, Ohio and Michigan, in Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Connecticut." See note, p. 841.

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From this, we see in Lincoln's nomination the influence of Marxists, working in closest harmony with other '48-ers in organizing and leading the German-American voters' resistance to anti-alien "nativism" and to slavery. This resistance was implemented in masterly manner in the resolutions. The call for the conference had gone forth from New York, where the Marxists were an important factor in the German-American mass organizations.

Marxism coincided with the deepest need of the American people in its period of greatest crisis. This luminous fact reveals the inherent right of the Party of Communism, which is today actively participating in the struggle against the bourbons of our times, to inscribe in its Constitution that it carries forward in our times the principles and traditions of Marx and Lincoln.

The ensuing Chicago Convention developed its most heated and prolonged controversy about the issue of full rights for the foreign-born, with the pro-Lincoln anti-discrimination element victorious. With this matter thus settled, resistance to slavery and the elimination of slavery in the event of war were foregone conclusions—for the North would be united.

The 13th and 14th Amendments were implicit in the Chicago Convention and its almost unknown forerunner, the *Conference.**

* * *

When the Civil War broke out Weydemeyer enlisted as a captain in the Union army. By distinguished service he became a general, rising to be commander of the military district of St. Louis.

Weydemeyer was but one of the many Communists who enlisted in the anti-slavery war. We come upon the name of August Willich, formerly a member with Marx and Engels of the Communist League. He, too, won high distinction in service, rising in 1862 to the rank of general. We find the name of Fritz Jacobi, a leading member of the Communist Club of New York, who had advanced from private to lieutenant before he fell at Fredericksburg; that of Robert Rosa, also a prominent member of the Communist Club, who served in the 45th New York and rose to be major; those of Alois Tillbach and Dr. Beust.

The valiant service of these and numerous other Communists in the Civil War is connected with the continuous support that Marx, Engels and their American followers gave to the cause of Negro emancipation. How eloquently the story of Dr. Douai instances that devotion!

Adolph Douai, already mentioned in connection with the Conference at Chicago, settled in Texas in 1852 upon his arrival as refugee from Germany. He threw himself into work for Negro emancipation, publishing and editing an Abolitionist paper. After three years of ceaseless persecutions, he was driven from San Antonio. Some years later he received a newspaper, on the front page of which was printed the following:

"This paper, edited and set up by Negroes, is being printed on the same press

* The facts relating to the Conference are derived from F. I. Herriott's *The German Conference in the Deutsches Haus*, Illinois Historical Society. Transactions for 1928. This is an original, thorough and important contribution to fundamental American political history, based upon twenty-three years of research.

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from which Dr. Douai for the first time advocated the emancipation of the Negroes in Texas. Let this serve him as a token of gratitude of the colored race that they preserve the memory of his efforts for their freedom." *

Marxian support to the Northern forces in the Civil War proceeded from the principle that abolition of Southern slavocracy was a historic necessity for "rounding-out" the bourgeois revolution of 1776. Marx saw defeat of the slave-holders as the precondition for consolidating the nation's productive forces; for the expansion of bourgeois democracy; and for the creation of a numerous, homogeneous, clearly stratified proletariat advancing its independent class movement. "Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin," he declared, "where in the black skin it is branded."

Hence, Marx supported the Northern cause and the government of Lincoln, not for any formal preservation of the Union, but on the basis that maintenance of the Union was predicated on the destruction of slavery—*that the war must be waged as a revolutionary war.* This position is forcefully summed up in his dispatch to the *New York Daily Tribune* (November 7, 1861), of which he was European correspondent:

"The people of Europe know that the Southern slavocracy commenced that war with the declaration that the continuance of slavocracy was no longer compatible with the continuance of the Union. Consequently the people of Europe know that a fight for the continuance of the Union is a fight against the continuance of the slavocracy. . . ."

* Frederick L. Olmsted, *A Journey Through Texas,* 1857, pp. 436-39; Hillquit, *Cited Work,* p. 191.

The role of Marx and Engels, and of the movements they led in Europe and America, in promoting the Union victory, is woven with indestructible threads into the revolutionary tradition of the American people. Only bias, and the ignorance it fosters, blind or silence America's historians to this fact.

Even bourgeois historians mention the aid the British workers gave to our cause in those crucial years, though none refers to Marx's rallying influence in that inspiring event, and few gauge the significance of their heroic giant demonstrations, so decisive in preventing the Palmerston regime and the government of France from throwing their forces on the side of the slaveholders against the revolutionary North.*

Today reactionary isolationists decree that every Spain bleed to death—

* The most celebrated of the demonstrations was the meeting at St. James' Hall, London, on March 16, 1863, held under the chairmanship of the liberal leader, John Bright. In the Inaugural Address of the First International, the following year, Marx stated: "It was not the wisdom of the ruling classes but the heroic resistance to their criminal folly by the working classes of England that saved the West of Europe from plunging headlong into an infamous crusade for the perpetuation and propagation of slavery on the other side of the Atlantic."

It is important to mention here Marx's letter of November 29, 1864, to Weydemeyer, which brings news of the founding of the First International: "The English members [of the International] consist mostly of the chiefs of the local trades unions, that is, the actual labor kings of London, the same fellows who prepared the gigantic reception for Garibaldi, and prevented Palmerston from declaring *war* upon *the United States,* as he was on the point of doing, through the monster meeting in St. James' Hall. . . ."

Quite evidently, the Communists of England were potent figures in the struggle for Union victory. The "labor kings" supported the North and helped to form the First International, as allies, co-workers, and to some degree adherents of Marx.

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every ravaged Spain that calls upon this, her sister republic, for aid. That chapter of our history, if presented in its fullness, would significantly recall the solidarity toward us shown by the advanced workers of Europe, in those destiny-shaping years. It would focus the light of today upon the congratulatory Address of the First International to the American people on the occasion of Lincoln's re-election. That Address, composed by Marx, conveyed to our embattled forefathers the alliance of Europe's men of labor, who realized that "with their hopes for the future, even their past conquests were at stake in that tremendous conflict on the other side of the Atlantic"; who "bore patiently the hardships imposed upon them by the cotton crisis, opposed enthusiastically the pro-slavery intervention . . . and from most parts of Europe contributed their quota of blood to the good cause."

The concluding words of that Address were:

"The workingmen of Europe feel sure that, as the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the middle class, so the American Anti-Slavery War will do for the working classes. They consider it an earnest sign of the epoch to come that it fell to the lot of Abraham Lincoln, the single-minded son of the working class, to lead the country through the matchless struggle for the rescue of an enchained race and the reconstruction of a social world." *

And the reply of the United States' Legation at London in behalf of President Lincoln to the International read:

". . . the United States regard their cause in the present conflict with slavery-maintaining insurgents as the cause of human nature, and they derive new encouragement to persevere from the testimony of the workingmen of Europe that the national attitude is favored with their enlightened approval and earnest sympathies." *

Three and a half score years later this land, in Lincoln's name, sent its sons, along with those from most parts of the world, to contribute on the battle-plains of Spain "their quota of blood to the good cause."

* * *

The founding of the First International in 1864, under the leadership of Marx and Engels, soon brought about in this country a trend toward affiliation among widening sections of class-conscious workers in the revitalized trade union movement of the Civil War period. The issue agitated the National Labor Union of the United States, the young trade union center founded in Baltimore in August, 1866.

From the outset certain bonds were created between this first national trade union federation in the United States and the International. At its founding convention, the National Labor Union adopted a resolution in favor of the eight-hour day. This resolution for the shorter work day proceeded from the *political principle* of labor's demand for greater effective leisure time, the "result of that condition of progress in which the workingmen of this nation are prepared to take a step higher in the scale of moral and intellectual life." A fortnight later, at its Geneva Conference, the International, in declaring for the

* Marx-Engels, *The Civil War in the United States* (Compilation), International Publishers, pp. 280-81.

* *Ibid.*, p. 283.

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eight-hour day, took note, in its resolution, of these pioneer efforts:

"The shortening of the workday is now being generally demanded by the working men of America; we demand it for the working men of the entire world."

At its founding convention, the National Labor Union, after considerable debate, also resolved in favor of independent working class political action, through the medium of a labor party. As a concession, however, to considerable opposition, the clause advocating the formation of a labor party was modified by the words, "as soon as possible." Nonetheless, the general position taken in the resolution proved an important stimulus to the development of independent political action by American labor.

Of great importance was the resolution recommending the organization of the unorganized into trade unions, and the organization of the unskilled as well as the skilled. By this signal action the National Labor Union stands out as the precursor of the great trade union centers that were to come after it—the Knights of Labor, the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O.

The convention also paid attention to the special problems of women workers, pledged its support to their struggles, and invited their cooperation. "No class of industry," declared the committee on resolutions, "is in so much need of having their condition ameliorated." Three years later, at its Fourth Convention, the National Labor Union resolved in favor of thorough organization of women workers, on the basis of "the same pay for work equally well done" and of "equal opportunities and rights in every field of enterprise and labor."

The great significance that the International attached to the founding of the National Labor Union reflected the identity of interests basic to both organizations, and to the workers of both continents. Marx wrote to his friend, Dr. Kugelmann, on October 9, 1866:

"I was afforded great joy by the American workers' congress at Baltimore which took place at the same time [as the Geneva Congress]. The slogan there was organization for struggle against capital, and, remarkably, most of the demands I drew up for Geneva were also put forward there by the correct instinct of the workers."

It would, however, be erroneous to assume from this that the International was an organizational parallel, a European replica, of the National Labor Union—that the former was primarily an economic organization. Such reasoning, evidenced by certain historians of American labor,* reflects the American bourgeois attitude of belittling the political role of the International in the United States. It leaves out of account the International's programmatic principle of "the struggle for the emancipation of the working classes . . . the abolition of all class rule," *i.e.*, the reorganization of society on Communist foundations.

"That Karl Marx wrote its Inaugural Address," states Selig Perlman, an associate of the labor historian, John R. Commons, "was merely incidental. It chanced that what he wrote was acceptable to the British unionists rather than the draft of an address representing the views of Mazzini." **

Astonishingly, this historian endeavors to answer the *why* of history with

* J. R. Commons and Associates, *History of Labor in the United States*, Vol. II, pp. 86-87, 131, 206.

** *Ibid.*, p. 205.

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the *It chanced* of metaphysics. Why was it that "what he [rather than Mazzini] wrote was acceptable" to labor? Surely we cannot be asked to admit as "merely incidental" the fact that the Mazzinists were non-Socialist republicans and that the "Brotherly Agreement" they offered for adoption as the Rules of the International was found to be vague, bourgeois-humanitarian, and, though charged with certain antique Socialist phrases, devoid of any clear conception of the class struggle.*

The historian who does not wish to "incidentalize" these logical imperatives must realize that for the International, which took over that masterly Inaugural Address as its statement of principles, the purely trade union aspects of the struggle were the most potent driving force toward an organization expressive of international labor solidarity; but that the International itself was not only a political organization, but the *political leader* of the working class.

Let us look at a specific instance of the distortions resulting from the "parallel-economic" theory of the International:

The organization rendered aid to strike-involved American trade unionists in the sphere of regulating immigration. Thus, the General Council's minutes of April 8, 1869, record a communication from the New York compositors' union requesting the International's help in checking the importation of European contract labor for the purpose of defeating workers on strike. The minutes contain the decision of the General Council that in strike situations it must do all in its power to hinder recruiting of European strike-breakers for American employers.

In the opinion of John B. Andrews, another associate of Commons, support of trade unions in strike situations through immigration control was "the first great object of the International."** Hence, according to Selig Perlman, in its efforts to gain the affiliation of the National Labor Union, "the inducement held out to the latter was of a practical nature: the international regulation of immigration."***

This narrow conception of the International's relations with trade union bodies derives, of course, from the view of the International as a parallel economic organization. Divested of fundamental political attributes, the International could not, by that theory, extend to labor organizations the leadership and assistance of vanguard, but had to hold out the "inducement of immigration control."

* It should be noted, however, that the draft of the Address contained certain concessions—not in principle, but in mode of presentation—rendered necessary by a number of factors: the historic situation; the political level of the working class, which, notwithstanding the revival of its movement, had, since 1848, become decidedly lowered; and the heterogeneous composition of the International, which was a confluence of such varied currents as British trade unionists, some with Chartist or Owenite hangovers; French, Spanish and Belgian Proudhonists; Italian Mazzinists; Polish emigrants, for whom their country's liberation was the central issue; German Lassalleans; and the associates of Marx, former members of the Communist League. Thus, Marx wrote to Engels on November 4, 1864: "It was very difficult to frame the thing [the Inaugural Address] so that our view should appear in a form acceptable from the present standpoint of the workers' movement. . . . It will take time before the reawakened movement allows the old boldness of speech. It will be necessary to be *fortiter in re, suaviter in modo* [bold in matter, mild in manner]."

* Commons, *Cited Work*, II, p. 87.
** *Ibid.*, p. 206.

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The gains of American trade unionism through the International's assistance in blocking importation of strikebreakers cannot be overstressed. It is also a truism that inducements are necessary in the inter-relationships of organizations. However, to limit the scope of the International's activity to the holding out of the inducement of immigration control is to travesty history. Such vulgarization reflects incapacity to grasp the nature of proletarian international reciprocity by those who know only the barter relations of a bourgeoisie rent by inner competition and national rivalries.

The issue holds great meaning for our day, when the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, the Communist Party, comes forward as a potent force stimulating the unification of labor's ranks in the face of reaction's offensive. All those who today detract from and slander the Party, charging demagogically that it has given up its fundamental socialist principles, proceed from one common motive—to deprive the working class of its vanguard that gives it consciousness of the long-range political import of the day-to-day struggles for immediate demands, that gives historic direction to its course in the broad front of all the democratic forces, that reveals the perspective of decisive victory and the program for its achievement.

* * *

At the second convention of the National Labor Union, which took place in Chicago in August, 1867, affiliation with the International became a prominent issue. President William J. Jessup moved to affiliate and was supported by the leader of the very important iron molders' union, William H. Sylvis, soon to become the foremost labor leader of his day and one of the greatest in American working class history.* The convention, though deciding against joining, adopted the following resolution:

> "*Whereas,* the efforts of the working classes in Europe to acquire political power, to improve their social conditions, and to emancipate themselves from the bondage under which they were and still are, are gratifying proof of the progress of justice, enlightenment and civilization;
>
> "*Resolved,* that the National Labor Convention hereby declares its sympathies and promises its cooperation to the organized working men of Europe in their struggle against political and social injustice."

At its fourth convention, held in Philadelphia in August, 1869, the National Labor Union elected an official delegate to the Basle Congress of the International, without, however, deciding to affiliate. The sudden death of Sylvis on July 27 of that year, it was generally conceded, was a decisive factor in retarding the trend toward formal union with the International.**

The nearest step taken to joining the International was a resolution

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* Both Jessup and Sylvis were in direct relations with the General Council of the First International. Jessup, a ship's carpenter, was also in close contact with Robert Applegarth, general secretary of the London joiners' union and a member of the General Council of the International.

** The General Council of the International paid tribute to the deceased Sylvis in a resolution concluding with the words: "That the American labor movement does not depend on the life of a single individual is certain, but not less certain is the fact that the loss sustained by the present labor convention through the death of Sylvis cannot be compensated. The eyes of all were turned on Sylvis who, as a general of the proletarian army, had an experience of ten years outside of his great abilities—and Sylvis is dead."

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adopted at the fifth (Cincinnati) convention, in August, 1870, through the suasion of Jessup:

"The National Labor Union declares its adherence to the principles of the International Workingmen's Association, and expects to join the said association in a short time."

This mass disposition for union with the International was clearly evidenced in the weekly paper, *The National Workman,* which began to appear on October 13, 1866, and became the organ of the New York central labor body and of the State Workingmen's Assembly of New York, annual convention of the state labor organizations. This publication popularized the activities of the International, reporting the proceedings of its Geneva Congress, held in September, 1866, and those of the General Council in London.

The factors in the National Labor Union that were decisive against international affiliation were before long decisive in the organization's decline. With the premature death of Sylvis, the class-conscious leadership necessary to keep the organization intact and resolute during reverses in a series of strikes was greatly diminished. From the beginning, the organization had been impaired by three major defects that were bound before long to undermine the many progressive positions it had taken. In the first place, the founding convention, notwithstanding its advanced character in regard to a number of important issues, committed the federation to a policy of arbitration as a substitute for strikes. The committee on resolutions put it:

"With regard to the subject of strikes, your committee give it as their deliberate opinion that they have been productive of great injury to the laboring classes, and would therefore discountenance them except as a dernier resort."

While it is correct that the working class uses the strike weapon as a last resort, the sheerly negative attitude toward strikes as "productive of great injury to the laboring classes" fails to recognize the dialectic of the strike action. The practice of the working class has shown that strikes very often result, not only in victory, full or partial, but also in a heightened sense of solidarity, in a development of class consciousness, and in organizational consolidation. These proletarian values are preserved in most cases, even if the strike results in a set-back: there is never an absolute defeat of the working class.

The National Labor Union, furthermore, failed to take a clear and determined position on organizing the Negro workers. In July, 1867, a committee appointed by the First Convention issued the important *Address to the Workingmen of the United States.* The Chairman of the committee and the author of the Address was A. C. Cameron, delegate of the National Labor Union to the Basle Congress of the First International, in 1869. The manifesto urged cooperation between Negro and white workers, calling upon "every union to help inculcate the grand, ennobling idea that the interests of labor are one." It warned that failure to bring this about would serve the purpose of the capitalists:

"Their cherished idea of antagonism between white and black labor would be realized, and as the Austrian despotism makes use of the hostility between the different races . . . to maintain her existence and her

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balance, so capitalists, north and south, would foment discord between the whites and blacks, and hurl the one against the other . . . to maintain their ascendancy and continue the reign of oppression. . . ."

But the Second Convention, held a month later, left the organization without a definite stand on the question. Despite the strong plea of President Sylvis, Richard F. Trevellick * and a number of delegates who advocated combined unions of Negroes and whites, the convention took the position "that the constitution already adopted prevented the necessity of reporting on the subject of Negro labor."

This was clearly an evasion of the issue. The organization later exchanged delegates with the separately-formed Colored National Labor Union; but essentially it maintained its non-committal position. In this it reflected the political immaturity of the working class, which was unable to grasp the significance of combining its movement for independent political action with the demands for complete Negro equality. Even the advanced National Labor Union, in its majority leadership, did not understand the historic responsibility of the working class in regard to completing the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1861-65.

In the struggle for according Negro labor full equality in the existing trade unions, the members of the First International and their adherents stood out as those most conscious of the historic meaning of promoting the democratic rights of the Negro working masses.

The National Labor Union, in addition, remained an annual federative conclave, without continuity of active work in the interim, without administrative headquarters or financial income from levies upon the affiliated membership. By depriving itself of labor's most vital and proven weapon —the strike, of the strength that comes from Negro and white solidarity, and of a permanent organization with day-to-day activities to realize its resolutions, the National Labor Union sealed its doom.* The culminating blow came with the severe economic crisis beginning in 1873. Within a short time the National Labor Union, having opened its ranks to sundry political adventurers, drifted into agrarian greenbackism and ceased to bear a working class character; by 1874 it was non-existent.

* * *

There did, however, exist in the United States groups affiliated with the International. The followers of Marx in this country had early formed their independent societies and clubs as Communist propaganda centers, in addition to working as Marxian propagandists in the trade unions and other mass organizations. Because of the influx of refugees, mainly from Germany, among them many Marxians, and because of the still undevel-

* Trevellick was elected by that convention to attend the Congress of the First International at Lausanne as delegate of the National Labor Union; but, lacking funds, he was unable to go.

* The tendency to ignore the Negro factor in the decline of the National Labor Union is characteristic of the historians of the bourgeois and Social-Democratic schools. Thus, Hillquit, in keeping with the Socialist Party's traditional lack of any constructive program for the Negro people, disregards the entire issue in his account of the National Labor Union.

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oped state of the American labor movement, those societies were composed almost completely of German "'48-ers." Such was the short-lived *Proletarierbund* which Weydemeyer set up in April, 1853, and such too was the Communist Club, organized in New York on October 25, 1857—first Marxian societies on these shores.

The founder and outstanding leader of the Communist Club, which accepted as its basis the tenets of the *Communist Manifesto,* was Friedrich Adolph Sorge, who had been associated with Marx and the London Communist Club. In the leadership with him were Konrad Karl and Siegfried Meyer. Like Sorge, they maintained constant correspondence with Marx. A notable event in the life of the Club was the large memorial rally it organized in June, 1858, on the tenth anniversary of the Proletarian June Days in Paris. In October, 1867, the Club became a section of the International Workingmen's Association. The following year the Club organized its forces into the Social Party of New York and Vicinity, the first independent political labor party.

The Sections of the International grew in time to over thirty, with a membership exceeding 5,000. The strongest and ideologically soundest American Section was the General German Labor Association, which, as an affiliate of the National Labor Union, joined the International in 1869 as "Section 1 of New York." Through its efforts several additional Sections developed in New York, among them one French and one Bohemian. Sections sprang up in Chicago, San Francisco, Washington, New Orleans, Springfield, Newark, Williamsburg and other industrial centers. The membership was drawn mainly from national groups—German, French, Bohemian, Irish, Italian and Scandinavian; but there was also a fair proportion of native Americans, evidenced by the existence of two native American Sections in New York. In December, 1870, the Sections established a Provisional Central Committee. On July 6, 1872, at their first national convention, they formed the North American Federation of the International.

The International, through its General Council in London and through its American Sections, conducted a series of significant activities in relation to the labor movement here. Memorable is the General Council's address of May 12, 1869, summoning the National Labor Union to rally American labor to oppose the impending war of Britain against the United States:

". . . the successful close of the war against slavery . . . has indeed inaugurated a new era in the annals of the working class. In the United States itself an independent labor movement has since arisen which the old parties and the professional politicians view with distrust. But to bear fruit it needs years of peace. To suppress it, a war between the United States and England would be the sure means. . . .

"Another war, not sanctified by a sublime aim or a social necessity, but like the wars of the Old World, would forge chains for the free working men instead of sundering those of the slave. The accumulated misery which it would leave in its wake would furnish your capitalists at once with the motive and the means of separating the working class from their courageous and just aspirations by the soulless sword of a standing army. Yours, then, is the glorious task of seeing to it that at last the working class shall enter upon the scene of history, no

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longer as a servile following, but as an independent power, as a power imbued with a sense of its responsibility and capable of commanding peace where their would-be masters cry war." *

It is well to note here that half a decade since his tribute to Lincoln for leading his people "through the matchless struggle," Marx, author also of this Address, summoned American labor to oppose an imminent war. This occurrence furnishes us today with an example *from American history* of Marx's approach to the question of war: war, not as a blanket designation for all conflicts, but as a *concrete* term which allows us to examine, as Lenin taught us to examine many years later, "from what historical conditions a given war arises, what classes lead it, and for what objectives"; and, upon that basis, to determine our attitude toward it.

The National Labor Union, over the signature of its president, Sylvis, sent an acknowledgement of this address, on May 26, 1869, stating:

"We have a common cause. It is the war of poverty against wealth. In all parts of the world labor occupies the same lowly position, capital is everywhere the same tyrant. . . . In the name of the working men of the United States, I extend to you, and through you to all those whom you represent, and to all the downtrodden and oppressed sons and daughters of labor in Europe the right hand of fellowship. Continue in the good work that you have undertaken, until a glorious success shall crown your efforts!" **

Memorable, too, is the enthusiastic welcome given by the American Sections of the International to the Fenian leader, O'Donovan Rossa, when he came here in 1871 to rally support for the cause of Irish freedom. Their action brought considerable prestige to the International among the Irish-Americans. As late as 1875, when the International was nearing its end, it gained the affiliation of the United Workers of America, a small organization of Irish workers, led by J. P. McDonnell, who was later to play a prominent role in the Socialist and trade union movement of this country. The great reception to O'Donovan Rossa is a tradition to be cherished by all progressive Irish-Americans in the face of the fascist Coughlins who seek to imbue hatred of communism in a people whose struggle for freedom has been close to the heart of every Communist from Marx onward.

Later in 1871, when the tide of fugitive Communards came to these shores following the defeat of the Paris Commune, the American Sections accorded them a warm reception. In December of that year, when the International called upon the people to protest the execution of three leading Communards, a company of Negro militia, the Skidmore Guard, participated. The advanced American workers demonstrated their understanding and approbation of the fundamental principle of the Commune—*democracy of all who toil with hand and brain, known as the dictatorship of the proletariat.*

It goes without saying that there were not lacking Hearsts and Dieses in those days to attempt to undermine with slander what they could not meet with truth. Thus, the first newspaper dispatches reporting the

* Herman Schlueter, *Lincoln, Labor and Slavery*, pp. 231-32

** *Ibid.*, pp. 233-34.

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great Chicago fire in October, 1871, attributed it to the hands of the First International. But as all impartial historians now admit, Mrs. O'Leary's cow was not a member of the First International. The General Council's report to the Geneva Congress of the International, the following year, complained, not without justification, that the no less fearful tornado that had laid waste the West Indies about the same time had not been credited to its account.

The North American Federation of the International, opposing all forms of "pure-and-simple" trade unionism, resolved "to entertain good relations with the trade unions and to promote their formation." Opposing, too, all notions of spontaneity in the labor movement, the Federation, recognizing its role of political vanguard, declared its duty to "combine the working classes for independent common action for their own interest, without imitating the corrupt organizations of the present political parties."

In keeping with this program, the organization participated actively in the strike struggles of American labor. In 1871 it supported untiringly the protracted strike of 30,000 anthracite coal miners in Pennsylvania, conducted by the Miners' Benevolent and Protective Association. The International thus established itself in the ranks of the American working class.

The American Sections of the International were the rallying force in the struggles of the unemployed, which swept the large cities in 1873-74, and advanced a program for relief containing the following three points, which became the campaign slogans of that unemployed movement—as they are today!

1. Employment on public works at the prevailing wage-rate.

2. Advances in the form of cash or food for at least one week to all who are in need of it.

3. No dispossession of tenants for inability to pay rent.

The fight for relief was conducted on the principle of collaboration between the trade unions and the unemployed—a policy today encouraged by the C.I.O., the Workers Alliance and the progressive forces in the A. F. of L.

An executive committee, representing trade unions and the Sections of the International, launched a vast campaign—mass meetings, demonstrations, and unemployed marches. On January 13, 1874, a large parade of unemployed workers in New York proceeding toward City Hall, where the mayor was to have addressed them, were savagely attacked by a horde of police when they reached Tompkins Square. Hundreds of demonstrators were seriously injured. Large demonstrations took place in Chicago, Louisville, St. Louis, Philadelphia, Cincinnati and Newark. In all of these actions the North American Federation of the International took an active and leading part.*

Those were the harbingers of the colossal unemployed struggles begun sixty years later and led by the vanguard of America's working class, the Communist Party. Those were the forerunners of the historic monster demonstrations in New York, Detroit, and other cities on March 6, 1930; of

* See: Hillquit, *Cited Work*, pp. 200-02.

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the epic hunger marches, the militant struggles against evictions, the battles for relief, and the current strikes and stoppages of W.P.A. workers for adequate relief and the right to work at prevailing trade union wages.

* * *

The Sections of the International could not have functioned as vanguard and teacher, if they had not founded their work on Marxian theory. Their resoluteness was nourished on the ideological sustenance of scientific communism. Their social composition and their inner educational life made possible their consciousness of the historic goal of the proletariat, which gave purpose to the struggles for immediate and partial demands in which they continuously engaged.

The members were predominantly proletarian. A resolution of the General Council, submitted by Marx to Sorge, on March 15, 1872, contained a provision "that no less than two-thirds of a Section's membership should consist of wage workers."*

Their high political level is thus characterized by Sorge, the leader of the International in the United States:

"Almost exclusively plain wage-workers and handicraftsmen of every possible trade, these proletarians vied with one another in mastering economic and philsophical problems. Among the hundreds of members who belonged to the Association from 1869 to 1874, there was hardly one who had not read his Marx [*Capital*], and more than a dozen of them had absorbed the most involved passages and definitions, and were thus armed against every attack of the capitalist, petty-bourgeois, radical or reform schools. It was gratifying to attend the sessions of the Association. . . ." *

As we look back upon these, our political ancestors, we take pride in their courageous pioneering, in the fact that they so fully realized what America could be, in the fact that they were not discouraged by being an advance-guard of armies yet unborn.

If they had been enabled to study the history of their Party in a living socialist land of enormous extent and limitless future, how eagerly they would have seized the opportunity!

That privilege is ours: the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* is in our hands.

A study of the history of the classic Bolshevik Party brings understanding of the unity of theory and practice—the unity of the day-to-day struggle around current issues and the basic struggle of socialism. Thus, we can master and explain the necessary, vital connection between the struggle for socialism and the advance of the democratic front.

* * *

No account of the activities of those early Marxian groups in the United States would be adequate without reference to their tactical shortcomings—to the task which they left uncompleted.

The guiding line of Marxism was set forth pre-eminently in the cited Address of the International to the

* *Briefe und Auszuege aus Briefen von Joh. Phil. Becker, Jos. Dietzgen, Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx und andere an F. A. Sorge und andere,* Dietz, Stuttgart, 1921. p. 53.

* F. A. Sorge, "Die Arbeiterbewegung in den Vereinigten Staaten von 1866 bis 1876," *Neue Zeit,* I. Band, Dietz, Stuttgart, 1891-92, pp. 391-92.

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American people, wherein Marx, its composer, opened up the perspective that the second American Revolution would initiate a new era of ascendancy for the working classes. By this declaration, he clearly indicated to his followers here that their task was now to make the workers conscious of their role, both in solidifying their own ranks and in winning allies to their side, particularly the toiling farmers and the Negroes: This is the sense in which he foresaw ascendancy "for the working classes."

The followers of Marx in the United States showed a lingering sectarianism that tended to remove them from effective connections with the main stream of native-born American workers, and a neglect of the farming population, its needs and its alliance with the working class.

This failing was largely a reflection of the undeveloped state of the working class, in a period of the continuously expanding frontier and the persisting petty-bourgeois ideology of an agrarian democracy. The immaturity of the working class generally found its expression among the German-Americans in Schulze-Delitzsch's cooperativism, which had class-collaboration as its core; and in the sectarianism of the Lassalleans, who were exerting certain influences in the labor movement and in the International, especially in its Chicago Sections.

Marx constantly urged his followers in the United States to build and strengthen broad trade unions, to have done with "narrow, moss-grown sectarian tendencies." In the cited letter to Bolte we meet Marx' celebrated passage on this question:

"The development of the system of Socialist sects and that of the real workers' movements always stand in inverse ratio to each other. So long as sects are (historically) justified, the working class is not yet ripe for an independent historic movement. As soon as it has attained this maturity, all sects are essentially reactionary. Nevertheless, what history has shown everywhere was repeated within the International. The antiquated makes an attempt to reestablish and maintain itself within the newly achieved form."

After discussing the struggles of the International against the Proudhonist, Lassallean, and Bakuninist sects, Marx declares sharply:

"Obviously the General Council does not support in America what it combats in Europe. Resolutions I (2) and (3) and IX now give the New York committee legal weapons with which to put an end to all sectarian formations and amateur groups and if necessary to expel them."*

A letter of June 3, 1874, addressed by the General Council in New York to Section 3 in Chicago, shows the gravity of this problem within the International. The following passage is revealing:

"It appears strange that we should have to point out to a section of the International the usefulness and extraordinary importance of the trade union movement."**

Sectarianism was instanced in the case of the Furniture Workers National Union. At its first convention, in 1873, this union accepted the principles of the International. Yet in the

* Resolutions I (2) and (3) declared against all sectarian names for Sections or Branches of the International, and required that they be designated according to their locality; Resolution IX emphasized the significance of the political activity of the working class and postulated that the workers' economic movement cannot be severed from their political activity.

** Commons, *Cited Work*, II, p. 229.

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report for 1877 its Executive Board admitted self-critically that the organization had confined its campaigns to German-Americans.*

These shortcomings became aggravated with the dissolution of the International. The efforts of Marx and Engels to correct them are notable in their correspondence with Sorge, Florence Kelley Wischnewetsky, and others, throughout the 'seventies and 'eighties, in the interim between the First and Second Internationals, and thereafter, until Engels' death.

By its inability to grasp the full significance of the tactical line projected by Marx for the period following the Civil War, and by its failure, therefore, to function consistently as vanguard, the Marxian element in the labor movement and in the International was not able to advance the working class to independent political action and to the establishment of a Marxian party.

* * *

In 1872, after Bakunin and his followers had split the International, the Hague Congress, upon the proposal of Marx and Engels, decided to transfer the headquarters of the General Council from London to New York. The reason was, principally, to prevent the General Council from becoming dominated, and the cause from being compromised, by the Blanquist putschists, a large number of whom had fled to London after the fall of the Commune.

The political situation in Europe had caused the International to lose its base in the three most important countries. In France, the organization was now outlawed. In Germany, from where the International's leading spirits were exiled, the Lassalleans formed against the followers of Marx and Engels an antagonistic camp; in addition, August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, the chief Marxian leaders, had been imprisoned for opposing Bismarck's annexation of Alsace-Lorraine and for supporting the Paris Commune. In England, the newly created labor aristocracy had impregnated an important section of the trade union leadership with opportunism which led to dissensions that could not fail to reflect themselves in the General Council. Clearly, the seat of the International could not long remain in London or on the Continent; there was even the question of the safety of its archives. The transfer was also made to provide incentive for the establishment of Socialist organizations on this side of the Atlantic, and for large-scale recruiting into the ranks of the International.

Conditions in Europe had considerably debilitated the International. The organization found here a more favorable basis, with its sections consolidated in the North American Federation and connected with the American working class through leadership in its struggles. This advantage was, however, offset by the virtual disconnection of the General Council from its European divisions, due to the intense persecution of their members and adherents in the widespread reaction following the defeat of the Commune. Save for communications from Marx and Engels, the General Council received no reports or financial quotas, which prevented it from

* *Ibid.*, p. 226.

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functioning as the international executive committee.

Under these conditions the organization could not survive. On July 15, 1876, in Philadelphia, the last Convention of the International took place, consisting almost entirely of delegates from the United States.

The International, in the twelve years of its existence, had guided the working classes of two continents to great achievements. It gave stimulus for the formation of broad working class organizations in place of the utopian societies and near-Socialist sects of the first half of the nineteenth century. In the words of Lenin,

> ". . . it laid the foundation of the international organization of the workers for preparing their revolutionary attack on capital, the foundation of their international proletarian struggle for socialism."

As its last act, the convention issued this proclamation:

> *"Fellow Working Men:*
>
> "The International Convention at Philadelphia has abolished the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association, and the external bond of the organization exists no more.
>
> "'The International is dead!' the *bourgeoisie* of all countries will again exclaim, and with ridicule and joy it will point to the proceedings of this convention as documentary proof of the defeat of the labor movement of the world. Let us not be influenced by the cry of our enemies! We have abandoned the organization of the International for reasons arising from the present political situation of Europe, but as a compensation for it we see the principles of the organization recognized and defended by the progressive working men of the entire civilized world. Let us give our fellow workers in Europe a little time to strengthen their national affairs, and they will surely soon be in a position to remove the barriers between themselves and the working men of other parts of the world.
>
> "Comrades! you have embraced the principle of the International with heart and love; you will find means to extend the circle of its adherents even without an organization. You will win new champions who will work for the realization of the aims of our Association. The comrades in America promise you that they will faithfully guard and cherish the acquisitions of the International in this country until more favorable conditions will again bring together the working men of all countries to common struggle, and the cry will resound again louder than ever:
>
> "'Proletarians of all countries, unite!'"

* * *

To us, ideological descendants of those valiant Internationalists, to all workers and all democrats carrying on the struggle in America today, those imperishable words are a prophecy and a mandate.

In the Communists of today the workers, the democratic people as a whole, have won the "new champions" who "faithfully guard and cherish the acquisitions of the International in this country."

The Communist Party of the United States, led by Earl Browder and William Z. Foster, has taken up the democratic mandate of the proletarian fighters of nineteenth-century America. The International in its relation to the American scene, and its Sections in the United States sought to promote the best interests of the American working class and the people as a whole. Today, the Communist Party, with fascism menacing, zealously champions the interests of the American people—labor, the farmers, the city middle classes, the

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professionals, the unemployed, the Negro people, the national groups, the young generation—stimulating, guiding, and helping the consolidation of their forces in a nationwide democratic front.

Those early Marxist-led organizations, far from having been an alien grouping on these shores, confined to a section of immigrant workers, as bourgeois and reformist-labor historians present them, were inseparably linked to the general labor and democratic movement, whose rising trade unions and people's formations they helped to build and, to a notable extent, stamped with their advanced consciousness. The workers adhering to the First International in the United States did so out of a deep concern for their country, out of a desire to preserve America from the despoilers. And just as for those pathfinders, the movements of the working classes in the various lands made manifest the need for international organization and cooperation, so for the Communist Party today, the experiences and interrelations of the world's laboring peoples are treasures —weapons!—that shall never be renounced.

The Communist Party hails the fact that its collaboration with all other Communist Parties in the Communist International, under the world-liberating banner of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, enables it to express the deepest needs and aspirations of the American people bound in common struggle with the peoples of all lands against the fascist destroyers of life, liberty and happiness. In carrying on the fight for the unity and well-being of our people, in preparing the laboring forces for the basic struggle for socialism, the Communist Party pays tribute to the toilers of the past and their pioneer Marxian detachment.

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THE NATIONAL GROUPS IN THE FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY

(On the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Communist Party of the United States)

BY IRENE BROWDER

"My children shall be your children and your land shall be my land because my sweat and my blood will cement the foundations of the America of Tomorrow." (From *Americans All,* issued by the Department of Missions and Church Extension of the Episcopal Church.)

IN THE U. S. Congress, in session while this is written (July, 1939), a flood of "Alien and Sedition Laws" have been introduced, many of which have been passed by the House. They are modeled upon those laws which disgraced the Administration of John Adams, 1796-1800, in the struggle against which Thomas Jefferson broke the power of the Federalist Party and assumed for a generation the direction of America's destiny. In every critical period in American history since that time, the forces of reaction have always made their first attack against the latest immigrant sections of the population, and have singled out for special attack those national groups most recently added to the American "melting pot." The democratic and progressive forces, which created and molded the great American traditions, have always been in the forefront in the fight for the full protection of the national groups and their unconditional assimilation with full rights into the body of the American people. In this respect, as in so many others, the issues and alignments of Jefferson's time anticipated those of the present, the period of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Not less than eighty-three such "Alien and Sedition Laws" are now before Congress. Every one of them is designed for aims identical with the "Alien and Sedition Laws" of Adams' time. They can be characterized by the words of a resolution of the Virginia Legislature, in 1798, written by James Madison in consultation with Thomas Jefferson, which boldly declared their aim was to "subvert the general principles of free government, as well as the particular organization and provisions of the Federal Constitution." Jefferson himself wrote the resolution adopted by the Kentucky Legislature, which condemned these laws as "contrary to the Constitution, one amendment to which has provided that no person shall be deprived of liberty without due process of law." Then, as now, the efforts to deprive "aliens" of their rights were but the opening wedge for undermining American democracy as a whole. Then, as now, it was possible to defend democracy only by taking up the struggle against "Alien and Sedition Laws" and defeating them.

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President Franklin D. Roosevelt has demonstrated that he understands the deep importance of this issue. Speaking before a gathering of the Daughters of the American Revolution, an organization which has sponsored many of the worst legislative proposals against immigrants, the President said, in April, 1938: "Remember that all of us are descended from immigrants." Mr. William Lane Austin, director of the census, has pointed out that more than 38,000,000 immigrants have entered the U.S. in the last one hundred years, and that they and their descendants constitute almost two-thirds of the entire population. It is thus demonstrated that all legislation and propaganda which sow intolerance and doctrines of inequality are more dangerous for the United States than for any other great country, for they strike at the very foundation of national unity, which in our country cannot exist except on tolerance and equality for all nationalities and races. President Roosevelt, in his letter of June 27, 1939, to the Council Against Intolerance, went directly to this issue, when he wrote:

"It seems to me especially fitting that on Independence Day we should renew our fealty to the principles of tolerance and equality forever embodied in our Declaration of Independence. Our fathers not only embodied these principles in the immortal Declaration but saw to it also that they were written into the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. These principles are as sacred to us today as they have been to the American people through all the decades since they became part of our national tradition. It is ours to preserve them as our most precious heritage out of the past and transmit them inviolate to those who are to follow us."

Much of the propaganda for the modern "Alien and Sedition Laws" is interwoven with the "struggle against Communism," the war-cry of all reactionaries and fascists the world over. This, among other reasons, makes it incumbent upon the Communists to be especially sensitive to the problem of the national groups and their protection, and to be prepared always to make their own distinctive contribution to the debates and struggles around this issue. The Communist Party of the U.S.A. originated, like our country itself, from the uniting of many groups of different national origin, and, like our country again, has become fully and distinctively *American* upon that foundation. We, Communists, because of our international outlook, are especially prepared to understand the words of Carl Schurz, an outstanding political immigrant to America, in which he described the United States as "the great colony of free humanity, which has not old England alone, but the world for its mother."

On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Communist Party of the U.S.A., it is therefore of special value to review the historical background of the national groups in American life, and to deepen our understanding of the issue as it presents itself today. In order to approach the problem in a brief article, we will concentrate our attention here upon a few historical moments and phases of American history, namely: (1) The American Revolution, including the first battles for democracy, culminating in Jefferson's rise to power in 1800; (2) the Civil War, and the battle for Negro rights; (3) the rise of the labor movement; (4) the modern struggle for peace and democracy; and (5) the establishment and growth of the Communist Party of the U.S.A.

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THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The general impression of the "man in the street" today regarding the men and women who made the American Revolution is that they were "English," a concept taken uncritically to include Irish, Scotch and Welsh by courtesy. But even in those days, while the British were predominant in numbers within the thirteen colonies, many other nationalities made contributions without which the Revolution could not have been successful. The French, for example, were not only the first explorers and settlers of the great Mississippi Basin, then known as the Louisiana Territory, but contributed many of the great names to the foundation of the Republic, in military and civil affairs. Lafayette is the only name generally spoken of today, but perhaps others were of equal importance, like Rochambeau, Du Portail, Lamar, Fleury, De L'Enfant, La Radiere and Stephen Girard. The Dutch, who had founded New Amsterdam before it became New York, left their impress indelibly upon the young republic. The Germans constituted more than a fourth of the population of Pennsylvania, and one-tenth that of all the Thirteen Colonies. Historians of the time are agreed that they contributed more than their proportionate share to the Revolution. Steuben is a name that ranks next to Washington and Greene in the military annals of the Revolution, with Mühlenberg, De Kalb and Herkimer high on the list. The Poles contributed Kosciuszko, Pulaski and de Zielinski; the Hungarians, Kovats; the Belgians, De Pauw; to mention but a few of the most illustrious. One of the greatest statesmen of the time was the Swiss Albert Gallatin in the Cabinet of Jefferson; he played a leading role in the Louisiana Purchase, in a long and illustrious career. A Jew, David S. Franks, was on the military staff of Washington; another, Haym Salomon, was one of the chief economic and financial organizers of the Revolution. A Swede, John Morton, cast the deciding ballot for the Declaration of Independence. The first man who gave his life in the Revolutionary battles was Crispus Attucks, a Negro, whose people, despite their slave status, made noteworthy contributions to the Revolution in many ways. Italians, Spaniards, Swedes, Portuguese and Finns participated in significant numbers. In short, the Colonies, at the time of the Revolution, were no longer "English"; already there had been born the "American people" compounded of many nationalities, and only this amalgam made possible the Revolution and its successful outcome that changed the course of world history.

In the light of these facts, attested by the greatest authorities on American history, it becomes clear that the cry against "aliens," "foreigners" and "immigrants," taken up today by most of the self-styled "patriotic societies," is the very essence of anti-Americanism, that it strikes against the very heart of the American tradition, against the very origin of our country. "All of us are descended from immigrants," as President Roosevelt reminded the super-patriotic enemies of the national groups in American life; but, even more important, *the Republic of the United States was created by immigrants* of the most diverse origin, and it was this very diversity that gave the American people its distinctive character.

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THE CIVIL WAR

In the two decades before the Civil War immigration from Europe assumed a mass character, playing a big political role in crystallizing the anti-slavery issue, and in connecting the cause of the North with the democratic forces of European countries. Annual immigration reached 100,000 in 1842, passed 200,000 in 1847, and went above the 300,000 mark in 1851. The immigrants came from all over Europe, the most important single group being the Germans, especially after the defeated Revolution of 1848.

As early as 1788, it was the Germans who had taken the first step under the Republic to organize the fight against Negro slavery, when a German Quaker settlement, in Germantown, Pennsylvania, adopted a formal protest against slavery.

The Germans, an almost solid bloc and leading most of the other national groups in the American population, swung behind the newly organized Republican Party, and in 1860 played a decisive role in the election of Lincoln. During the Civil War that ensued, again the immigrants, especially the Germans, contributed a larger proportion of their numbers to the armed forces than the rest of the population, as in the Revolutionary War. It is of interest to note that the Jewish population, although relatively small at that time, contributed nine generals, over 600 other officers, and more than 6,000 privates to the Union Army.

One of the leaders of the German Revolution of 1848, who came to America and played a great role in the foundation of the Republican Party, the election of Lincoln, the winning of the Civil War, and the political battles of the Reconstruction period afterward, was Carl Schurz. He was one of the key figures in American political life during twenty years, always in the progressive camp.

It was during the Civil War that the international labor movement first played a decisive role in American historical development. It was Karl Marx, founder with Engels of the First International, who rallied the British labor movement to oppose and defeat the intentions of the British government to enter the American conflict on the side of the Southern slave Confederacy. The immediate material interests of the Manchester textile workers, who suffered terrible unemployment due to the Northern blockade of the South which shut off American cotton from English mills, had been expected to align them on the side of their reactionary pro-Southern government; but under the stimulus of Marx, Engels and the First International, which maintained close ties with the United States through the German immigration, the British textile workers led the British working class in an intransigent fight which checkmated the interventionist plans of their government against Lincoln and the Union. There can be no doubt that, without this role of Marx and the British workers, the secession forces of the Confederacy would have gained sufficient support from abroad to change the outcome of the Civil War, thereby destroying American leadership in world progress.

There is, further, not the slightest room for doubt that without the energetic and self-sacrificing spirit of the immigrant population of European national origins, especially the Ger-

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mans, the United States would not have been prepared to meet the crisis of the struggle over slavery, to rally its forces around Lincoln, and emerge triumphantly from that testing period of history. Again, as in every great crisis in our history, the national groups had demonstrated their progressive role, which has determined the character of the American people.

NATIONAL GROUPS IN THE FOUNDATION OF OUR LABOR MOVEMENT

The organized labor movement took on a mass character and became a permanent and growing factor in American life during the 1880's. The first great wave of immigration of European national groups had been more or less absorbed into American life, and their trade union and political experience, brought with them from the old countries, had been transmitted generally through the working class, especially in industries and localities where the most highly developed nationalities had found their places. If the American Federation of Labor made such rapid strides in its formative period, and became the dominant labor movement for decades, this was facilitated to a considerable degree because its leadership had drawn extensively upon the contributions of the national groups, and was itself more or less familiar with the most advanced thought of the European labor and Socialist movements. The single dominant figure of the A. F. of L. from its foundation, until his death, was a Jewish immigrant, Samuel Gompers. His early training was mainly influenced by a circle of immigrant workers, among whom the outstanding figure was August Strasser, an Austrian Socialist. This fact, however, did not prevent the same Gompers at the height of his career, from developing into a typical trade union bureaucrat, a leader in class collaboration in the interests of the capitalists and at the cost of the workers. The most active leaders of the Chicago labor movement, who became the martyrs of the Haymarket Case, were, in their majority, from the national groups.

From 1881 to 1896, the annual average immigration to the United States was around 500,000, in 1903 it rose for the first time above 1,000,000, and in 1907 it reached its highest point of more than one and one-quarter million. Between 1900 and the outbreak of the World War, some 3,000,000 Italians and 6,000,000 from Slavic countries entered the U.S. Through all the period of rising immigration figures, when the main body of immigrants were from the industrially less advanced countries, the bulk of the immigration flooded into the basic industries of the country, where the chief demand was for unskilled and semi-skilled labor. In the pre-war years, therefore, there arose for the first time a serious antagonism between the organized labor movement and the new immigration.

Among the older unions of the A. F. of L., only the United Mine Workers succeeded (with periods of greater or less success) in organizing the great bulk of workers in a basic industry, including the older strata of workers and the successive waves of immigrants of many different national groups. Shortly before the war, the garment industry, manned almost entirely by the national groups, with Jews from the Slavic countries occupying the central role, was organized for the first time, with the rise of the International Ladies Garment

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Workers, and shortly after of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Unions. These organizations, arising in struggle against the worst sweatshop conditions and lowest standards in American industry, quickly became among the most progressive and militant unions in the labor movement, raising their standards to the general American level. During and immediately after the war, great masses of workers in basic industries, mainly of the national groups, came into the organized labor movement, outstandingly in the meat packing and steel industries, in the campaigns, led by William Z. Foster. But it was not until the rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (C.I.O.) that this great reservoir of strength for the labor movement began to be tapped with the permanent organization of steel, auto and rubber workers, electrical and radio workers, marine workers and longshoremen, agricultural workers, and so on, to a total of some four millions, or more than the whole A. F. of L. contained at the time of organization of the first C.I.O. center, in 1935.

National groups that play an important, even decisive, role in the trade unions are Czechs, Jugoslavs, Poles, Ukrainians, Italians, Germans, Hungarians, Irish, Jews and Scandinavians. For the full development of the trade unions, especially of the C.I.O. but also of the A. F. of L., special attention will have to be paid, more than ever before, to the national groups. The unions must more and more recognize and cater to the special needs and interests of all the national groups working within their jurisdiction, but especially of the large, major nationalities. The old and narrow prejudice of pure-and-simple trade unionism, that the unions have nothing to do with the national question, because they are merely economic organizations, must be broken down and eliminated completely. The main task is educational work, which will bind the national groups to the labor movement, through deepening their understanding, and finding the realization of their group aspirations through more active participation in the general movement of their industry and class. We must learn how to reach the soul of the national groups, to enlist their loyalty and to channelize their energies. Only thus can the fascist agencies working among them be defeated, and these groups fully incorporated into the democracy of the nation.

The trade unions will thus strengthen their economic functions by becoming also schools of citizenship for the national groups, preserving their best contributions to American life which they bring from their special origin, while welding them all indissolubly into the body of the American people.

FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY

In all critical periods of American and world history, the influence of the national groups in the U.S. has been predominantly and decisively thrown to the support of progressive policies, for the defense of peace and democracy. We have already reviewed some of the outstanding items of past experience which give concrete evidence to support this general statement. It is now necessary to note briefly the role of the national groups in present-day political alignments.

Of perhaps first importance has been the role of the national groups in supporting and stimulating the

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progressive trends within the Democratic Party which finally produced the New Deal policies of President Roosevelt, particularly after 1935. Since the time of Cleveland, the Republican Party had been traditionally the ruling party, its reign being broken only by the eight years of Woodrow Wilson, until the election of Roosevelt in 1932; the Republican attitude toward the national groups was always one of arrogant condescension, at best, while at worst it became one of active hostility and repression. The result was that the national groups generally orientated toward the "party of opposition," even when, on the whole, its policies made it only a Democratic Tweedledee to the Republican Tweedledum. The national groups became the principal base of support in the Northern and Western states for the Democratic Party, which had its main base in the so-called solid South. This eventually led, under the circumstances of the great crisis of 1929-32, to a qualitative change in the character of the Democratic Party, under the leadership of Roosevelt. In this great transformation of the political alignment in the U.S. the national groups played a role second only to that of organized labor.

It is most interesting to note that the same process was at work even within the Republican Party. Two national groups, of the older immigration, had been traditionally attached to the Republican Party and found it extremely difficult to align with the Democrats, even after the rise of the New Deal; these two were the Germans and Scandinavians. But even these groups have been long in rebellion against the reactionary Republican Party. In two states where they exercise a decisive political influence, Wisconsin and Minnesota, they gave rise to independent state parties—the Progressive and Farmer-Labor Parties—which came into existence in splits from the Republican Party. They have been moving, in the last period, even though with hesitations and backslidings, toward a fusion with the New Deal wing of the Democratic Party.

The importance of the national groups in political life, especially their influence in the elections, was demonstrated by the Congressional elections in 1938 and the mayoralty elections in 1939 (Chicago, San Antonio, and other places).

This progressive and democratic role of the national groups was based, primarily, upon their position as a large part of that section of the population which has come to be known as the "under-privileged," or "lower income groups," whose interests were neglected or violated by the ruling class in the country. But also very important, and second only in weight to their immediate interests as Americans, was the influence of the bonds between the national groups and their lands of origin, an influence which on the whole worked in the same direction. We may illustrate this point.

The Czechoslovak groups in America, always deeply interested in the independence of their land of origin, received their first important political support from the Democratic President Woodrow Wilson, which enabled them to play a great role in the establishment of the Czechoslovakian republic after the World War. Today, during and after the destruction of their republic by Hitler, they have found sympathy and support in New Deal, progressive and labor circles.

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Among domestic reactionary political circles, both Republican and anti-New Deal Democrats, they have been met by coldness and hostility expressing the reactionaries' approval of Chamberlain's "appeasement" policy that culminated in the betrayal of Czechoslovakia. Thus the outraged national feeling of Americans of Czechoslovak origin binds them closer to the progressive New Deal camp.

The large Polish-American population has had much the same experience, and is today aroused by the threat of Hitler to send the Polish republic to Czechoslovakia's doom. Like the Czechs they find their natural alignment, as "underprivileged" Americans, with the New Deal camp confirmed and strengthened by their allegiance to Polish independence, which find support in the anti-fascist policies of Roosevelt and all New Deal supporters. Much the same is also true of the South Slavs and Lithuanians, who are an important group of American citizens.

The Spanish-American population demonstrated its overwhelming support for the Spanish republic during the two and a half years of fascist invasion that culminated in its destruction. The crime committed by the American government, in abandoning its duties toward Spain under international law and existing treaties, has aroused the indignation of the Spanish-Americans as it did that of all progressive-minded people. At the same time, the outspoken sympathy of the majority of New Dealers, together with the warm solidarity of labor and progressive circles, toward the Spanish republic, has bound the Spanish-American population more closely to the general progressive camp.

Italians in America have been subjected to a gigantic effort to transform them into a reserve and instrument for the fascist axis powers. But this influence has been stubbornly resisted, and while Italian-Americans are hesitant to speak openly against Mussolini's regime, they are more and more coming out for democracy and progress and against the general camp of reaction and fascism. Their greatest political hero is Fiorello La Guardia, who, with such men as Vito Marcantonio, is leading the overwhelming majority of Italian-Americans into the progressive camp.

American Jews, of manifold national origins, are finding their former tendency to divide themselves among all camps and tendencies strongly offset by the pressure of a growing and vicious anti-Semitism, cultivated by almost all the reactionaries. This pressure drives the Jews to unite themselves with the progressive and democratic camp for simple self-preservation. But notwithstanding the brilliant contributions to American progress by the Jewish people, it must be noted that their most influential leadership retreats before the attacks of reaction, and attempts to follow the suicidal policy of "appeasement," on the style of Chamberlain.

Among the largest national groups, especially among those last to arrive in America, the overwhelming majority are members of the Roman Catholic Church. The hierarchy of that Church is very reactionary in politics, with honorable exceptions, outstanding among which is Cardinal Mundelein. Its predominant tendency is pro-fascist and anti-progressive. Yet it is a great mistake to look upon the Catholic community as a reactionary bloc in American political life. The Church hierarchy exercises

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much influence for reactionary purposes, but it is not able freely to follow its own inclinations with any surety of leading its community. It is worthy of special notice that while the Church hierarchy is overwhelmingly and bitterly anti-New Deal, yet among the body of Catholic voters there is a higher proportion of New Deal supporters than perhaps among any other denomination. This is a fact beyond the power of the hierarchy to change; for it springs from influences deeper even than Church ties.

THEIR ROLE IN OUR PARTY'S HISTORY

Like the labor movement in general, the Socialist and Communist movement in the United States has been deeply influenced and stimulated by the national groups. It was the early German immigration which first brought Marxian thought to America. The main body of the pre-War Socialist Party was composed of the national groups, organized in their separate national organizations, called Socialist Federations. It was mainly from these federations that the Communist Party arose in 1919.

It is not within the scope of this article to deal with the history of the C.P.U.S.A. in any detail, even in relation to the national groups. But the general role of the national groups, and the changes that have taken place, must be briefly set forth in order to complete the outline of the problem, and give the foundation for understanding the highly important current tasks in this field.

The national group Federations were, during the first six years of the Party's life, the main organizational structure of the Party, which largely existed by and through the Federations. Under the conditions of that period, however, marked by governmental repressions and by renewed capitalist "prosperity," this organizational structure, always highly undesirable for a political party and especially so for one which aspired to a Bolshevik character, became a most serious barrier to the growth and maturing of the Communist movement. It served to perpetuate and emphasize sectarianism, and the "Leftist" trends that had been from the beginning characteristic of the American revolutionary labor movement. It crystallized every feature that cut off the Party from the main American masses, even including the masses of the national groups. Before the Party could seriously begin its mass political work, it had to break with the organizational idea of composing itself as a federation of national group federations. The struggle for the establishment of a uniform Party structure, based upon the branch, and grouping the branches according to geographical divisions, city, district and state, with no separate representation of national groups as such, covered several years. Its effective achievement coincided with the period of cleansing the Party of the Lovestoneites and Trotskyites, and was interwoven with that struggle. The establishment of a homogeneous Party structure, based upon the principle of democratic centralism, was fully accomplished in 1929-1930, with the clarification of the basic Party policies.

In the ensuing period, up to 1936, the Party was growing and maturing along a basically correct line, at once Americanizing and Bolshevizing itself —two sides of the same process. Yet it is to be noted that, after the break

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with the old Federation structure and the decisive drive toward the basic American workers, there had resulted in practice a serious neglect of the national groups, in place of the former near-monopoly of the Party. Indeed, this went so far that there arose theories to the effect that the national groups were fast disappearing as significant factors in American political life. Needless to say, the Republican and Democratic Parties never suffered from any such illusions. While the Communist Party was neglecting the national groups, the old established parties, especially the Democratic Party in the big cities, were strenuously wooing these groups and bringing them more fully than ever before into the main stream of American political life. It is indeed ironic that the Communist Party, which is so often attacked as being composed of "aliens," should have been the only important party which in this period, 1930-1936, actually neglected the national groups and the foreign-born. It was George Dimitroff whose influence awakened the C.P.-U.S.A. again to this basic problem of American life, beginning with his historic Report to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. In 1937, at the June Central Committee meeting of our Party, the question of the national groups was raised for fundamental discussion; and at the Tenth Convention, 1938, the basic direction was given for the present Party attitude to this field of work, recognizing it as fundamental to the very understanding of the character of the American people, its history and its role in the world.

American Communists are now beginning to study and to master the history of their own country. That also means that we must study and master the history of our own Party, which is destined to lead our country into its next higher stage of historical development. If we are moving in this direction today with much greater understanding and energy, a great deal of the credit for this must be assigned to the inspiration imparted to our work in this field by the great and new *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,* which our Party has been studying with such enthusiasm for many months.

We have learned much and and must learn more from the C.P.S.U. about the national question and its role, in the politics of the day and in the Socialist Revolution. We must, of course, carefully avoid any mechanical transferrence of Soviet experience to America, where on the whole the nationality problem is quite different in its concrete expression. At the same time, it is impossible to overemphasize the fact that Lenin's and Stalin's teachings on the national question, while in the main dealing with the national question in the Soviet Union, have deep international significance, and are the indispensable prerequisite to any serious understanding of the national groups in America, whose problem is derivative from the general question of nationality.

A correct understanding of the nation and of nationality, as a stage in mankind's progress toward unity of the human race, gives at the same time the understanding of the American people, a nation compounded of many nationalities, which denies not one of them but incorporates them into a greater unity.

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THE SOVIET UNION AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

BY ALEXANDER TRACHTENBERG

A REVIEW of the twentieth anniversary of the Communist Party, which naturally involves a review of the history of the various struggles of the American working class during the past twenty years, must also include a backward glance at the activities in behalf of the first socialist state —the Soviet Union.

The February, 1917, Revolution, which overthrew the tsar and opened the road to the Socialist Revolution, roughly corresponds, in point of time, to the emergence of the Left wing in the Socialist Party, which formed the main stream of the militants, who two years later laid the foundation of the present Communist Party.

AMERICAN PEOPLE INTERESTED IN RUSSIA

Living in a democratic republic, the American people long followed the denial of freedom to the people in Russia. They knew from the immigrants in their midst, who had fled from religious and national persecution in the various parts of the Russian empire, of the oppressive economic and political regime. Russia was known in the United States as the land of the pogrom, of prisons and Siberian exile for those who dared to fight for freedom. From exiled revolutionists who found asylum in this country, the American people learned that there were two Russias: the dark Russia of the tsar, and the Russia of the revolutionary movement of the workers, peasants and the intellectuals who were struggling against the tsarist regime and everything it stood for. The news of the revolution in Petrograd, and the forced abdication of the tsar on March 15, electrified the American masses, and there was great joy among all those who sympathized with the Russian revolutionary movement, particularly among the ranks of the labor movement.

While the labor movement, American progressives, and democrats generally, hailed the epoch-making event, there was no clear understanding of the forces which were there to guide the Revolution onward; there was no clear voice in this country to explain the course which the Revolution had to take to complete its historic task. There was a great deal of confusion as to the various Russian parties and groups and what they represented. The Socialist Party, which was the mass party of the American working class at the time, was—to a great extent—a provincial movement. While generally aware of the international character of the Socialist movement, its members and sympathizers had not been educated to understand

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the various political tendencies in the European Socialist and labor movement. As a rule, very little had been published in the Socialist press regarding the struggles going on in the various European parties over policies and tactics which the working class should pursue on the road to socialism.

When it became evident that America would enter the war which had been raging in Europe for three years, the Socialist Party called an emergency convention for April 7, to consider its attitude toward the developing war crisis. Meeting three weeks after the overthrow of the tsar, the St. Louis convention, which crystallized a large Left representation under the leadership of Charles E. Ruthenberg—later the founder of the Communist Party and its first secretary—was greatly animated by what was happening in Russia. Besides the resolution dealing with the war, the convention also voted to send the following cable to the Petrograd Soviet:

"We, the Socialist Party of the United States, in national convention assembled, send fraternal greetings to the Socialists and the workers of the Russian republic, and hearty felicitations upon their glorious victory in behalf of democracy and social progress.

"We feel confident that you will take advantage of your newly acquired political liberties to join hands with us and the Socialists of the world in a concerted movement for the establishment of a speedy and lasting peace on the basis of democracy, justice and progress, so that the workers of the world may resume their struggle for the economic and political emancipation of their class. Long live the international solidarity of socialism."

LENIN'S RETURN TO RUSSIA

With the return of Lenin to Petrograd, in April, and the promulgation of the Bolshevik program, an opportunity was afforded to American Socialists to appreciate the meaning of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the forces behind it, the policies of the various groupings which were contending for leadership of the workers and peasants, and the correct avenue which the Revolution had to follow in order to achieve its logical ends. The American press, conscious of the great sympathy of the democratic masses in this country for the Russian Revolution and seeing how avidly they were following the unfolding of the revolutionary events, popularized primarily the name of the Princes Lvovs, the Rodziankos and the Milyukovs as the spokesmen of the Russian people, obscuring the fact that they represented the big Russian bourgeoisie.

But news was trickling through to the Socialist and labor press of the formation of the Soviets of workers', peasants' and soldiers' delegates, and of the important political and organizational role which they began to play among the great masses of the Russian people. Through Lenin's writings, through the slogans of the Bolsheviks which were reaching the United States, American workers began to learn that, side by side with the power of the Provisional Government and the class which it represented, there was rising a contending power, represented by the all-Russian Soviet in Petrograd. The slogan, "All power to the Soviets," raised by the Bolsheviks, began to penetrate an advanced section of the American workers. They saw in it the only logical course the Russian Revolution must take, if the country was to be saved from the ruin of the imperialist war, and move toward the goal of social-

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ism, for which the Russian masses had been fighting for two generations and for which, according to Lenin, the Revolution of 1905 was the "dress rehearsal."

THE AGITATION FOR MOONEY

The American workers became aware of the true spirit of international solidarity among the revolutionary workers of Russia when a laconic dispatch from Petrograd was received by the American press that a demonstration, led by the Bolsheviks, had protested to the American Embassy against the threatened execution of Tom Mooney, sentenced to death through a frameup, for his militant activity among the workers on the Pacific Coast. Ambassador Francis was forced to cable President Wilson informing him of the feeling among the Russian workers against the U.S. government because of Mooney's conviction. The concern of the American government, to keep Russia in the war on the side of the Allies, made President Wilson watch carefully every move of public opinion in that country. It was this mass protest during the early weeks of the Revolution which forced Wilson to demand that the California governor commute the sentence, and Mooney was thereby saved from the gallows. It also made the Mooney case internationally known and helped to organize protests throughout the world, paving the way for the freedom which Mooney now enjoys.

Mooney himself has on numerous occasions publicly declared that if it were not for the Petrograd Bolshevik demonstration he might not have lived to prove the frameup character of his conviction.

THE ROOT MISSION

President Wilson, cognizant of the great sympathy among the American people for the young Russian republic, decided to send a government mission to bring greetings to the Russian people, ostensibly on the occasion of the overthrow of the tsar and the establishment of a democratic republic. But Wilson entertained other and more direct reasons for sending this mission: he desired to propagandize the workers' Soviets and secure their support for the policy of the Allies that Russia continue in the war. The Provisional Government, headed by Milyukov and later by Kerensky, was, of course, anxious to pursue this program; but Wilson saw that the Soviets, which had the leadership of the masses, needed to be swung around to the policy of the imperialists in the war. This purpose could be easily observed in the composition of the mission, and particularly in the selection of its leader, the Republican elder statesman, Elihu Root. The appointment of the latter recalled to Americans how ten years earlier, as Secretary of State under President Theodore Roosevelt, he had tried to deport to tsarist Russia two Lettish peasants who had participated in an uprising against the German baron landlords in Latvia and whose extradition was demanded by the tsarist government. Only by an aroused public opposition, organized through the efforts of the Socialist and labor movement in this country, were these two revolutionary peasants saved from extradition, and the right of political asylum maintained.

President Wilson could not people this mission only with representatives

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of the Chambers of Commerce, manufacturers' associations, and the representatives of the War Department. He realized that representatives of labor must also be included. The American Federation of Labor first vice-president, James Duncan, and the expelled Socialist, Charles Edward Russell, were selected. The mission was naturally a failure from the start, since its objective was really not to help the Russian people and their Revolution, but to strengthen the bourgeois parties in Russia through American loans, through assistance with war materials and other supplies.

Although representing a democratic republic, the American ambassador, David R. Francis, acted no differently than did the representatives of other Allied powers; he sent reports to his government about the revolutionary "rabble," who, he said, would not last long if proper assistance were given to the Provisional Government. He tried particularly to create public opinion in America against Lenin and the Russian Bolsheviks, whose activities, he insisted, were inspired by the German general staff.

This campaign of vilification of the true leaders of the Russian Revolution came to its height through the publication of the spurious and notorious Sisson Documents, concocted by Edgar Sisson, a member of the so-called Committee of Public Information, whose representative he was in Russia. These "documents," ostensibly secured in Russia, and widely popularized in the United States, purported to "prove" finally and incontestably, that Lenin and his immediate co-workers were German agents sent to Russia for the sole purpose of taking the country out of the war on the side of the Allies. The Sisson Documents are perhaps the blackest act committed against the Russian Revolution in the most critical early period of its existence.

The July Days, when Kerensky tried to organize a military offensive and sacrificed thousands of Russian lives, exposing himself as a tool of the Allied and Russian imperialist elements; the Kornilov conspiracy which attempted a military putsch; and similar attempts to strangle the Revolution—all these events were followed with bated breath in this country. The collapse of Russian economy, as well as the disintegration of the Russian armies at the front, was forcing a solution of the unbearable situation. But while the Bolshevik program for the solution was becoming clearer every day, the reformists in the American Socialist movement, the counterpart of the Russian Mensheviks, could see only chaos if the Bolsheviks came to power. Chaos *was* abroad in the land, but only a definite revolutionary program, a program of workers' rule, of democracy, of socialism, could organize victory of the Russian people. The Left wing which was being forged within the American Socialist Party was perceiving this more clearly every day.

THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

When the bourgeois-democratic revolution passed over to the victorious proletarian revolution on November 7, there was great joy and recognition of the correctness of Lenin's teachings and the Bolshevik slogans through the eight months of the revolutionary struggle.

Then the reactionary American press let loose vile, vituperative at-

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tacks upon the Soviet leaders and those who sympathized with them in this country. Scare headlines even in the so-called "respectable" capitalist press almost daily announced all sorts of nefarious deeds of the young Soviet government—with the aim of whipping up anti-Russian sentiment in this country. While so-called statesmen and persons of importance, with whom the wish was father to the thought, were periodically announcing to the public the imminent collapse of the Soviet government—always in the next few weeks!—they continued to defame and malign the Soviet government which was attempting, with heroic efforts, to pull the country out of the ruin it had inherited and put it on the road toward socialism.

The establishment of a workers' government in Russia evoked in this country, as well as throughout the rest of the world, not only sympathy but pride among the working masses. Many of them saw in this victory the harbinger of a new era in the history of human society.

The official Socialist press, while it still printed occasionally favorable material, was at the same time spreading confused information as to what was going on in Soviet Russia.

The capitalist press stopped looking to Russia as the source of its news but established factories for newsmongering about Russia in bordering countries, with the center at Riga. There were great difficulties in obtaining correct information. Superhuman efforts had to be employed to secure true information and make it available to the American people. Reports made by Raymond Robins, head of the Red Cross mission, on his return from Russia; stories by journalists like John Reed, who managed to send information by devious routes; news that could be secured through European working class newspapers, which could more easily obtain direct reports from Russia—helped to create a body of authentic information which was an antidote to the vicious propaganda organized against the Soviet government and the people.

To organize better the dissemination of the truth about Soviet Russia, there was formed, in 1918, an information bureau, headed by a Finnish Socialist in this country, who was later deported to the Soviet Union and became president of the Karelian Soviet Republic. A group of Socialists and others who organized the bureau were determined to do everything they could to spread the truth about Russia, not only in the labor movement but among the people generally, to answer the calumnies of Russian Mensheviks and their reactionary supporters here.

As more authentic information became available, previously skeptical and neutral elements grew more willing to give the Russian people and their government an opportunity to carry out their program for the rehabilitation of the country, which had suffered from the devastations of the imperialist war and the economic collapse during the Kerensky regime.

FOREIGN MILITARY INTERVENTION

In 1918, the German armies marched into Russia, followed by the armed expeditions of the various Allied powers, in the attempt to overthrow the young Soviet government. The capitalist and landowning

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counter-revolutionary forces within the country organized their armies with the aid of the imperialist powers. The American masses clearly realized that the Soviet government was being fought by all these black forces because it was helping the Russian people to organize a society where there would be no capitalists and landowners but a society free from exploitation and oppression.

The whole American labor movement was stirred by the events in Russia. Hosts of working and middle-class people were beginning to organize into groups, holding meetings, discussions, debates, on the meaning of the Socialist Revolution in Russia. At these meetings they protested against the intervention and the blockade established by the Allied imperialist powers, and against the German invasion of Russia.

The dispatch of an American military expedition to Siberia to collaborate with the French and Japanese missions there, the sending of troops to Archangel to assist the British intervention, brought forth great protests among the workers and liberals in this country.

On the first anniversary of the October Revolution, Eugene V. Debs, awaiting disposition by the Supreme Court of his conviction for opposing the imperialist war, wrote:

"On this anniversary day we pledge you brave and unflinching comrades of the Soviet Republic not only to protest against our government meddling with your affairs and interfering with your plans, but to summon to your aid all the progressive forces of our proletariat and render you freely all assistance in our power."

Demands for the withdrawal of American troops from Russia was made throughout the country and found a response in Congress. Speaking in the Senate, Senator William Borah vehemently protested against the sending of troops to aid the White forces. He said, among other things:

"The people of the United States do not desire to be at war with Russia. If the question were submitted to the people of this country, there would be a practically unanimous voice against war with Russia. . . . While we are not at war with Russia, while Congress has not declared war, we are carrying on war with the Russian people, we have an army in Russia, we are furnishing munitions and supplies to other armed forces in that country."*

General William S. Graves, who was in command in Siberia, realized that the aims of his Japanese and British military associates with regard to the utilization of American troops was not in accord with his understanding of their mission, and he refused to cooperate with them. Similarly the American troops sent to the North of Russia soon became disaffected. The parents of the soldiers sent there were vigorously protesting at home and the troops were soon recalled.

LENIN WRITES TO AMERICAN WORKERS

One of the points of the famous Wilson "fourteen points," which represented American foreign policy, was devoted to Russia. Following a declaration regarding Russia's right to choose *her own* "political development" and "national policy," promising were the words:

"The treatment accorded to Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs, as distinguished

* Quoted in Frederick L. Schuman's *American Policy Toward Russia Since 1917*, p. 163.

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from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy."

The *acid test* of the "good will" and the "unselfish sympathy" was, of course, the presence of Allied troops and military supplies, including American, on all Russian borders where counter-revolution was raging.

Lenin's *Letter to American Workers,** written precisely under these circumstances and made available in the United States in various forms, helped to arouse the American workers to the dangers confronting the Russian Revolution, and to explain the reasons of the separate peace with Germany and the true reason for the military intervention in Russia. Lenin wrote in his famous *Letter:*

". . . When in October, 1917, the Russian workers overthrew their imperialist government, the Soviet power, the power of revolutionary workers and peasants openly proposed a just peace, a peace without annexations and indemnities, a peace fully guaranteeing equal rights to all nations—and proposed such a peace to *all* the countries at war.

"And it was the Anglo-French and the American bourgeoisie who refused to accept our proposals; they were the very ones who even refused to talk to us of a universal peace! Precisely *they* were the ones who acted treacherously towards the interests of all peoples by prolonging the imperialist slaughter." **

Twenty years have passed since Lenin penned these trenchant words describing the attitude of the Allied powers to Soviet Russia, on the question of peace. The consistently advocated Soviet formula of "no annexations, no indemnities," of a just peace, was rejected by the rapacious imperialists who later countered with their Versailles. Today Chamberlain and Daladier cannot refuse to enter into conversations with the Soviet representatives which their predecessors refused twenty-one years ago, but they act just as "treacherously toward the interests of the people" as then, and the people must be on their guard against their treacheries and expose them as Lenin did in his *Letter.*

* V. I. Lenin, *A Letter to American Workers,* International Publishers, New York.
** *Ibid.,* p. 11.

AMERICAN LABOR ALLIANCE

The sporadic movements and organizations formed during 1918; the hundreds of meetings held throughout the country, particularly the great meetings held in New York in the old Madison Square Garden, when the first Soviet bureau of information was formed, and later when the Soviet government appointed its first official representative to the United States, led to the calling of a conference early in 1919 to form a national organization known as the American Labor Alliance for Trade Relations with Russia. The national committee, selected at the conference of delegates from trade union, Socialist and various other organizations, consisted of some of the most representative labor leaders in this country. It was headed by Timothy Healy, president of the International Union of Firemen and Oilers, and included such labor leaders as William Johnston, president of the International Machinists Union; Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers; Benjamin Schlessinger of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union; and other leading figures who acted as vice-presidents, with the present writer as secretary. Healy had just returned from attending the British Trade Union Con-

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gress as a fraternal delegate from the A. F. of L., where he had heard an authoritative report on the situation in Soviet Russia made by a British labor delegation to that country. Although generally considered a conservative trade union leader, he became a staunch fighter against all traducers of Soviet Russia and demanded a square deal for the workers' and peasants' government.

This committee carried on an energetic activity especially among the trade unions. The members of the national committee and scores of other labor leaders addressed meetings throughout the country. Resolutions supporting the platform of the American Labor Alliance were circulated among thousands of local unions and state Federations of Labor, as well as international unions. Thousands of endorsements were received by the national committee from local trade unions who saw, besides, that opening of trade relations with Soviet Russia would provide work for the unemployed who were then increasing in numbers.

Through its efforts, the first public hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was organized on a resolution by Senator France, of Maryland, favoring recognition of the Soviet government. At this hearing, outstanding labor leaders spoke in favor of recognition. It must be said that President Samuel Gompers of the A. F. of L., and other conservative labor leaders joined the reactionary forces in the attempt to thwart the work of the Alliance among A. F. of L. unions. Undaunted by defeats, Healy and other delegates always raised the question of Soviet recognition at A. F. of L. conventions. Communist and Left-wing delegates were particularly consistent on this question.

Acts of solidarity of American with Soviet workers were exemplified in this period, not only in general protests against American intervention in Soviet Russia, but in such acts as the strike of Seattle longshoremen against the loading of ships with ammunition for the counter-revolutionary Admiral Kolchak in Siberia. Similar acts occurred in other ports, when the United States was sending supplies to Russian counter-revolutionary armies. These acts are part of the best tradition of the American workers.

During this period the largest portion of the militant membership had withdrawn from the Socialist Party to form the Communist Party. But the militant elements represented by Debs and his followers, who still remained in the Socialist Party, expressed warmest sympathy for Soviet Russia and participated together with the Communists in various activities on behalf of the Soviet people. These and similar joint activities helped the militant elements to find their way to the Communist movement.

From the Atlanta federal prison where he was sent to serve a ten-year sentence, the 68-year old and sick Gene Debs conducted in the fall of 1920 his fifth presidential campaign as a working class candidate. With women not yet voting, Debs drew nearly a million votes, the highest he had ever received. The election coincided with the third anniversary of the Russian Revolution, and Debs wrote on that occasion, expressing the sentiments of the entire progressive labor movement:

"The emancipation of Russia and the es-

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tablishment of the Workers' Republic is an inspiration to the workers of the world. I am sure that the same spirit that conquered capitalism will develop the geniuses that will conquer the devastating diseases you inherit from capitalism in Russia and combat the present mad methods of alien capitalist governments who seek to destroy the newly emancipated people of Soviet Russia."

TECHNICAL AID TO SOVIET RUSSIA

Almost from the first years of the Revolution, American workers began to form groups with the idea of going to Soviet Russia to help in the work of reconstruction and building of Soviet industry. Groups of technical aid were organized in various crafts, not only among immigrant Russian workers but also among American-born. These groups would collect funds among themselves, purchase tools and supplies, and offer their services to the various industrial organizations in Soviet Russia. Thousands of such workers went there at that time, some returning later.

In the industrial field, signal assistance to the Russian workers was organized by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, which formed a special company known as the Russian-American Industrial Corporation. Through a campaign inaugurated after the return of President Hillman from Soviet Russia, the A.C.W. collected among its members and others, through the sale of stock, $167,000, which it invested in tools and machinery to help establish some experimental clothing factories, bringing American methods of mass production to a country where clothing was still being manufactured on a small scale, handicraft fashion. The full amount of the Amalgamated investment was later gratefully paid back by the Soviet clothing industry.

THE FAMINE

The Volga region had experienced periodic famines throughout Russian history. As a result of a prolonged drought, intensified by the economic disorganization of the country during the imperialist and civil wars, a famine of great proportions broke out in the Volga region while Russia was still in the throes of civil strife. When news reached the United States that thousands of peasants and their families, in the central Russian regions, were dying of hunger, there was an immediate welling-up of sympathy and a spontaneous demonstration of a desire to send food and supplies to the starving people.

There was already in existence in this country a society for medical aid, organized primarily by physicians who were collecting funds to purchase medical supplies for hospitals and clinics, because the blockade established by the Allied powers prevented the Russian people from purchasing such supplies from the European countries upon which they depended. Even used razor blades were collected and sent to Soviet Russia for use in operating rooms. Similarly, when the need for feeding the great masses of people, who could not obtain food in Russia, became apparent, there was an immediate response to the idea of organizing a campaign to collect funds for the purchase of foodstuffs.

THE ROLE OF HOOVER

Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce in the Harding Administration, was also head of the various relief agencies of the Allied governments in Europe. Fresh from completing a "Samaritan" job of helping to destroy the Hungarian workers'

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government—by getting the Rumanian Government to send an army against Soviet Hungary for the price of a large supply of foodstuffs which they badly needed—Hoover became interested in the problem of the Russian famine, and was considering offering aid to Russia, but only on his own terms, through the American Relief Administration.

Hoover did not like the idea of an organization being formed to collect funds among the American people, to be sent to the Soviet government for the purchase of grain in the United States or other countries.

To a committee, which he invited to come to Washington, and of which the writer was a member, he threatened to communicate with the governors of the various states and urge them to prosecute all those who would attempt to collect funds for Russian relief, unless we agreed to turn over all collections to his agency (A.R.A.), which would make the purchases and send their representatives to handle distribution directly to the starving sections of the country. The committee refused to accept Hoover's ultimatum and informed him that they would proceed with the appeal for, and collection of, funds, openly stating that these funds would be sent to the Soviet government, being satisfied that it would use this aid where it was most needed.

The Friends of Soviet Russia, which grew out of this initial attempt, soon developed into an extensive organization with branches throughout the country. With the aid of the Communist Party, trade unions and other organizations it raised over a million dollars in cash, collecting these funds among the American people as a token of solidarity and sympathy between the people of democratic America and the people of liberated Russia. In addition to funds for the purchase of foodstuffs, there was also a campaign to send clothing and medical supplies, of which large quantities were secured and dispatched.

In aiding Soviet Russia during this time, the American people helped to break the blockade which was maintained even after the foreign interventionists had been defeated and driven out.

The American Relief Administration went to Soviet Russia with food supplies purchased from American farmers, through funds generously provided by Congress. This action met with general acclaim. There were also the Quakers, who sent funds and a number of their workers to help in the famine regions, distributing supplies and aiding the people directly. Unlike the A.R.A. they fed adults as well as children. Their sympathetic attitude to the Russian people and cooperation with the government in trying to fight the famine has endeared them to the Soviet people. Many of the Quakers stayed on after the famine to help with reconstruction.

The famine emphasized the backward agricultural situation in the whole of Russia. Twenty-five million small peasant holdings, conducted by the most outdated methods, needed more fundamental assistance than merely helping them to overcome famine in a certain region of the country. As part of the greater movement in the United States to organize relief to the famine stricken, there was also formed a special group

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of agriculturists, initiated by a son of Ella Reeve Bloor, Harold Ware, an agricultural student and practical farmer. As an active participant in famine relief work, he realized that the problem was bigger than immediate relief. He proposed that part of the funds used for the purchase of grain be employed to buy tractors and other agricultural implements which should be sent to Soviet Russia, accompanied by practical American farmers, to teach the peasants how to cultivate their soil and prevent famines in the future. In commenting upon this particular assistance which Harold Ware and his associates gave to Russian agriculture, Lenin wrote to this group: "I hasten to express my deep appreciation in the name of our republic and request you to keep in mind that not a single kind of help has been so timely and so important as the help shown by you."

THE "ECONOMIC VACUUM"

Secretary of State Chas. E. Hughes did everything to discourage American business from forming trade relations with Russia, by declaring that that country was an "economic vacuum" which would exist as long as its present economic and political system continued. In this he followed, of course, his colleague in the Cabinet, the Great Engineer, Hoover, who was sure that Russia would never produce anything, nor have anything for export, unless it abandoned its economic system. Before these Republican leaders, the reactionary Democrat Colby, who acted for a time as Secretary of State under Wilson, wrote a well-known diplomatic note prophesying no change in American policy toward Soviet Russia until that country returned to capitalism. The Soviet government was quick to reply, that the difference in the social and political systems need not stand in the way of peaceful relations between the two countries. This attitude was later reiterated by Stalin in an interview with an American publisher when he declared that "American democracy and the Soviet system may peacefully exist side by side and compete with each other."

Although Hughes tried to impress the American industrialists with the terrible risk they would be taking if they engaged in business with Soviet Russia, many representative trading and industrial organizations began to deal with that country and its various industrial and commercial agencies. Several official trading agencies representing the Soviet government were established in this country, carrying on negotiations with various firms. At first Colonel Raymond Robins, and later Colonel Cooper, who went to the Soviet Union to supervise the building of the dam on the Dnieper River, did a great deal in disabusing the minds of businessmen about the Russian "vacuum."

Notwithstanding the absence of recognition and regular diplomatic relations, usually required for definite trade treaties between nations, business relations were increasing from year to year, growing into tens of millions of dollars yearly, with the most important American firms satisfied that the commercial risks were good and that they stood to make a good profit from business with Soviet Russia. American businessmen did not misplace their confidence. While this period is well known for defaulting

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payments due the United States, it is a matter of record that the Soviet government met all its obligations contracted through purchases in this or any other country.

THE QUESTION OF RECOGNITION

During the reactionary Republican administrations of Harding, Coolidge and Hoover, that is, between the years 1921-33, every important country in the world except the United States had established diplomatic and trade relations with the Soviet Union. Could it be perchance that the State Department remembered that tsarist Russia refused to recognize the American Republic when it was founded for over thirty years and retaliated by refusing recognition to the Soviet Union for fifteen years?

Countries which had waged open war against the Soviet Union were forced to recognize the growing industrial and commercial importance of the country, and bowed before the inevitable by recognizing it as a world power.

In the United States, precisely where there was such a great popular demand for recognition, the Republican administrations consistently refused to open negotiations, and Congress continued to shelve resolutions, especially championed by progressive members of both Houses of Congress year in and year out. Senator Borah, first as a member, and later as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, consistently introduced in the Senate resolutions and spoke in favor of recognition; but his arguments proved of no avail.

However, though the Soviet government remained unrecognized, there was in effect in the United States a Russian ambassador extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary in the person of Boris Bakhmetiev who had come here in June, 1917, with credentials from the Kerensky government. Although that government had long passed out of existence, the State Department accorded Bakhmetiev full rights of an ambassador, allowed him to occupy the Russian embassy building in Washington and to draw upon the Russian government funds on deposit in the United States. Needless to say, these funds were used not to meet the needs of the Russian people fighting to maintain its liberties on many fronts of their far-flung country, but to fit out armies of its enemies.

Colonel Robins, who previously had worked with the Kerensky government, cooperated with the Soviet government and recommended its recognition when it came to power, on the hard-headed American theory that "the thing to do with a corpse is to bury it, not to sit up with it." "Ambassador" Bakhmetiev continued to represent the corpse for several years, and finally asked the State Department to allow him to resign, either because he could not walk any longer with a ghost or because the funds were giving out, or, perhaps, because the armies he helped to support with these funds were being routed by the Red Army. At any rate the State Department permitted Bakhmetiev to retire to private life, but at the same time it recognized his chargé d'affaires, Serge Ughet, as the official representative of the "state of Russia." He, too, finally passed out of the picture, causing in the meantime great difficulties in connection with court litigations and similar cases.

The election of President Roose-

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velt brought about the radical change in the American policy in relation to the Soviet Union, as it did in relation to many other problems affecting the American people. Immediately following the inauguration of President Roosevelt, an invitation was dispatched by him to President Kalinin to send a diplomatic mission to the United State to negotiate an agreement, which led to formal recognition in 1933.

Thus the demand made upon the American government to recognize the newly-established government in Russia following the proletarian revolution was at last fulfilled. It had been made, at first, by the advanced workers in this country, supported only by a few outstanding liberal spokesmen, such as Colonel Robins and Lincoln Steffens; later by broader sections of the labor movement and many representatives of middle-class elements, particularly in the scientific and educational fields, some of whom had visited Soviet Russia and had brought back favorable reports of progress. And, finally, it was made by the various business elements who found a ready market in the Soviet Union, particularly in the field of industrial and agricultural machinery and supplies, engineering and technical assistance, and the sale of such goods which the country lacked and the purchase of raw materials which the United States could advantageously utilize. Instead of the government taking the lead in recognizing Soviet Russia in the early years of the Revolution, thereby opening up the country for American commerce and contact, by recognizing Russian fifteen years after the Revolution, it merely put the stamp of approval on something that had come into effect many years before.

AMERICAN ENGINEERS

Most of Russian industry was destroyed or damaged during the imperialist and civil wars. Those individuals and groups who came to offer technical assistance could only aid in reconstruction of ruined industries. But with the revolutionary attempt not only to reconstruct old industries but to build new ones, which came with the historic First Five-Year Plan, inaugurated under Stalin's leadership, there began to come to the Soviet Union in large numbers, engineering and other technical personnel. They came as individuals and in groups through contracts with American industries, to participate in this gigantic effort to transform what was hitherto known as an agricultural country into a great industrial power. There were many among these American engineers and technicians, themselves perhaps of pioneer stock, who saw in Soviet Russia an opportunity to contribute to the building up of a new country. Colonel Cooper's reports of the friendly cooperation extended to him by the Soviet officials and his Russian co-workers must have encouraged them a good deal in the decision to go to Soviet Russia.

Lenin did not live to see the influx of American engineers who helped to carry out his great dream conceived in his famous electrification plan, which is considered the forerunner of the Five-Year Plans. But he corresponded with the great American electrical engineer, Charles Steinmetz, a lifelong Socialist, who sympathized with the October Revolution and wrote to Lenin, offering his assistance.

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Stalin paid great tribute to the Americans who brought their knowledge and experience to the aid of young Soviet technicians and workers, to aid in the tremendous task of pulling the country out of a backward economy into a highly-developed industrial state.

"We respect the efficiency Americans display in everything," Stalin said, "in industry, in technology, in literature and in life. . . . Their industrial methods and productive habits contain something of the democratic spirit. Our industrial leaders who have risen from the working class and who have been to America immediately noticed this trait and they liked it."*

After the ending of the Civil War and the lifting of the blockade, in the mid-twenties, there began a continuous stream of travelers to the Soviet Union from all corners of the world. They came as individuals or in groups, eager to see for themselves what was going on in this country where the workers and peasants had established their own government and against which the capitalist governments were waging warfare. They read the reports in the capitalist papers of the destruction of the country and the prophecies that the people would surely turn to capitalism on their own, since they refused to follow the invitation of the various capitalist countries extended to them through the invading armies.

The world was later to learn through the public treason trials of the wrecking methods employed in the attempt to bring back capitalism to Russia. The remnants of the counter-revolution, joined by false leaders and their dupes, carried on the war as secret armies, after open intervention had been defeated by the heroic workers and peasants. The Benedict Arnolds, Aaron Burrs of the Russian Revolution—the Trotskys of all hues—met their deserved doom, and their masters were warned that greater vigilance will no longer offer them an opportunity for their espionage and diversionist activities.

* *Interview with Emil Ludwig.*

AMERICAN TRADITIONS

American workers particularly were anxious to see the Soviet Union for themselves. The American press was most vicious in its attacks upon the Soviet people and its leaders because they dared to change their economic system and established a government based upon this system.

Reared in the American tradition of the Declaration of Independence, and the heroic struggles of their own Revolution, and the continuous awareness of the meaning of the democratic rights and liberties proclaimed in the Constitution and Bill of Rights obtained through the Revolution, the American workers saw in the establishment of a new type of government an event as basic as the revolutionary government which the American people had established when they defeated their oppressors.

The workers' government in the twentieth century, they thought, was just as new and revolutionary in the capitalist world as a republican government established in the eighteenth century when autocratic monarchs ruled. They remembered from their schoolbooks how the young American republic was maligned by the world reactionaries of that time, and they gloried in the memory that their forefathers fought to maintain their republic in spite of bloody struggles,

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internal treacheries and world opposition. They sympathized with the Russian people who had thrown off a three-hundred-year-old tsarist autocracy, and obtained their political liberties, but who had gone further than merely substituting one capitalist government by another. They had established a workers' and peasants' government, and had carried on the Revolution to the point of building a socialist society.

TRADE UNION DELEGATIONS

Travel to the Soviet Union developed to such an extent that special tourist organizations were formed—the World Tourists, Open Road and numerous others. Groups of trade unionists and people interested in education, health, social conditions, cultural achievements, etc., went to the Soviet Union, investigating phases of life in which they were especially interested. They returned, some publishing their findings or impressions, others sharing their experience with co-workers and friends.

Through the Friends of the Soviet Union, which grew out of the Friends of Soviet Russia, formed in the famine years, there were organized trade union delegations of workers in various industries who were annually invited by the Soviet trade unions to visit their country during the two great annual holidays, May First and the anniversary of the Revolution, November 7. Year after year these delegations came into direct contact with workers in the various industries, visited various parts of the Soviet Union where new industries were springing up, where cities similar to Pittsburgh and Cleveland were being built within four or five years' time. They returned marveling at the tremendous progress being made and the wonderful opportunities afforded to the workers in their economic, social and cultural advancement.

The American Trade Union Delegation which visited the Soviet Union on its tenth anniversary, in 1927, included outstanding trade union leaders and was joined by a group of well-known American economists, in an advisory capacity. The delegation interviewed Stalin, with whom they discussed various basic theoretical and political problems.

Stalin's reply to the question regarding Lenin's contribution to Marxism and similar comments have placed the results of the interview among the treasures of Marxism-Leninism. Upon returning to the country, both groups published reports of their findings, which recorded the great economic progress and political consolidation of the Soviet power among the people.

CULTURAL RELATIONS

The Soviet Union has become a veritable Mecca for the American professionals and scientists. The influence of the Soviet theater and the cinema among the advanced workers in these fields has grown tremendously. The high regard with which American scientists hold the Russian scientific workers and their achievements, bountifully supported and encouraged by the Soviet government, is also well known. Exchange of scientific data and information between American and Soviet scientists is growing. International scientific congresses are being held in the Soviet Union (Physiologists in 1935, Geologists in 1937.)

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There was cooperation in Arctic exploration between Soviet and American scientists, in world flights, and the bringing of the U.S.A. and and U.S.S.R. into closer neighborly proximity. The outstanding flights were those of Wiley Post, Howard Hughes, the "Land of Soviets" in 1929, over the Bering Straits; the two recent trans-polar flights to the West Coast; and the Kokkinaki flight over the Great Circle Route; the splendid work of Stefansson and Wilkins in search of the Levanevsky plane. As a result of these world flights, all these relations have led to an increasing good will and a greater friendship between the peoples of these two countries. The American Friends of the Soviet Union, the American Council of Soviet Relations, the American-Russian Institute, the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce; such publications as *Soviet Russia Today,* are helping Americans to know more about the Soviet Union and are making America better known to the Soviet people.

Ever larger audiences are provided for American authors, the circulation of their books in Russian translations are running into many millions.

GREAT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The achievements of the Five-Year Plans of industrialization are for all to see. From a backward agrarian country, serving in the main as a market for the industrial products of other countries, the Soviet Union, thanks to socialist planning, can be today an independent, self-sufficient country. The slogan to catch up with and overtake the other industrial countries, which the Soviet people had set for themselves, is rapidly becoming a reality, and the Soviet Union today is superseded in production only by the United States.

The change which has taken place on the land can be compared only with the effects of the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century. The ancient twenty-five million individual peasant holdings were swept away and, instead, 250,000 collective farms, industrialized to the extent of employing 250,000 tractors, 170,000 combines and other advanced agricultural equipment manned by 6,500 machine and tractor stations were formed. Not so many years ago only single tractors were imported from the United States.

Side by side with economic development in the city and on the land, the standard of living of the people is rising, social and cultural services are provided in ever larger proportion.

The United States which, as Marx pointed out, was a colony of Europe till the Civil War, progressed very rapidly afterwards, and within a comparatively short time overtook England—the workshop of the world.

But that was when capitalism was young and virile. Now it has entered its decayed stage. When the crisis came, factories were shut down or operated part time. Millions became unemployed and the American standard of living deteriorated. Naturally, American workers looked to the Soviet Union, and wondered at the tempo of its industrial development and the rising well-being and security of its people amidst world economic retrogression. Only the feverish armaments competition in capitalist countries have put many idle workers to work.

The American farmers, who were losing their homesteads and were being turned into landless poor, could

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not but be impressed with the achievements of farm collectivization in the Soviet Union.

THE NATIONAL POLICY

The national policy of the Soviet Union, forged by Lenin and Stalin, has been, since the beginning, an inspiration to the oppressed national minorities and subject peoples everywhere. The new Soviet Constitution inscribed as a basic law of the land that which has already been carried into life with such phenomenal success:

> "The equality of the rights of citizens of the U.S.S.R., irrespective of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life, is an immutable law." *

The millions of immigrants who came to this country seeking refuge from national oppression, those who witness today the subjugation of weak nations by the fascist aggressors, and the Negro people, denied in the South even the rights guaranteed others by the Constitution, all these Americans cannot but recognize the revolutionary importance of the national policy of the Soviet Union—truly an association of free peoples, building in common a socialist society.

The Jewish people, always a scapegoat where tyranny and oppression ruled, are being hounded and pogromed in fascist countries today. Even in the United States bigots led by the fascist priest Coughlin are permitted to incite against the Jews and appeal to the basest prejudices of the ignorant and fanatic groups. In the Soviet Union the Jews enjoy equal rights with all peoples. Anti-Semitism has been declared a capital crime in the Soviet Union.

The liberation of women is also one of the greatest achievements of the socialist revolution. From the most degrading position which the greatest majority of women occupied in the illiterate, superstition-ridden old Russia, particularly among the poor of the cities and among the peasants, they have risen to the position of equality with men and are given full opportunities for their advancement in all phases of Soviet life.

As for children, the world knows that the U.S.S.R. has become a children's country. Unlike the capitalist countries, the Soviet Union is very much concerned with the future, with the growing welfare of its people—this is the socialist content of its being. Therefore the young generation commands great attention and everything is done to provide the best opportunities for rearing a healthy, vigorous nation.

CONSISTENT PEACE POLICY

The February Revolution was born in the mass opposition to the imperialist war. "Peace" was the mighty slogan which the war-weary masses carried on their banners till the October Revolution; and when the Soviet government was formed, the first action recorded was the Peace Decree written by Lenin and approved by the Soviet on November 8, 1917. It demanded a "just and democratic peace," "a peace without annexation [*i.e.*, without the seizure of foreign lands, or the forcible incorporation of foreign nations] and without indemnities." It brought into the open the secret treaties of the tsarist govern-

* "Article 123," *Constitution of the U.S.S.R.*, p. 42. International Publishers, New York.

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ment in order to expose the imperialist nature of the war.

Consistently during the entire history of its existence, the Soviet Union has stood for a permanent and enduring peace policy, Lenin wrote:

"We shall not stop at great concessions and sacrifices in order to maintain peace. But there is a limit beyond which we cannot go. We shall allow no mockery of the peace treaties, we shall allow no attempts to disrupt our peaceful labor."

Stalin continued Lenin's foreign policy. He declared:

"Our policy is a policy of peace and of strengthening trade relations with all countries. . . . We have succeeded in maintaining peace and have not allowed our enemies to draw us into conflict, despite a number of provocative acts and adventurist assaults by the warmongers. We shall continue this policy in the future with all our might and with all resources. We do not want a single foot of foreign territory; but we will not surrender a single inch of our territory to any one. That is our foreign policy."

Stalin stated on another occasion:

"We stand for the support of nations which are the victims of aggression and are fighting for the independence of their country."

The sympathy of the Soviet Union with the Spanish and Chinese peoples and the support accorded them in their struggles against fascist aggressors stem from this policy.

Non-aggression pacts were signed by the Soviet Union with all its neighbors except Japan, which declined Soviet proposals because it has ambitions of conquest.

The U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. are the strongest democratic nations. They are both concerned with the maintenance of peace and with stopping the warmongers. The Soviet Union was the first to sign the Kellogg Peace Pact, renouncing war as an instrument of national policy. It proposed to all nations complete or partial disarmament. It continues to advocate united action in behalf of peace. President Roosevelt's famous Chicago speech against the aggressors coincided with the aspirations of the Soviet peace policy. The peace interests of the two countries are common, and common action in behalf of peace is dictated by these interests.

Earl Browder, in speaking at the Town Hall in New York on February 27, 1939, summarized as follows the relation between the Soviet Union and the United States:

"Regardless of whether one may approve or disapprove of the inner regime of the Soviet Union, and of its economic system, one thing is clear beyond all doubt for every American who loves his country and wishes to preserve its independence and well-being. That is, that the Soviet Union, its government and its people, are natural friends of the United States and its people, and the two nations are naturally friends, with common aims and faced with common enemies, in the present strained and dangerous international situation, in which the new world war is already begun. There is no possible or conceivable course of events which could place the United States and the Soviet Union on opposite sides in the world-alignment which is being hammered out by the aggressions of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo alliance of warmaking powers. The Soviet Union is unalterably on the side of international order and peace, against all aggressions everywhere in the world; the only way in which the United States could be on the opposite side would be for our country to enter the path of imperialistic aggression as a partner of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis, and this, I think it will be agreed, is so directly contrary to the whole

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history, tradition, and temper of the American people, as to be unthinkable." *

THE AMERICAN COMMUNISTS AND THE SOVIET UNION

Consistently supporting the Soviet Union since its inception, American Communists were acting as internationalists and as Americans. The two are not mutually exclusive or contradictory, they are complementary—the reactionary isolationists to the contrary notwithstanding. It was in the interest of American democracy that the Revolution in Russia should succeed and that the White Guard and interventionist forces be defeated. It is in the interest of America that the Soviet Union, as Earl Browder emphasizes, join its strength with the power of the United States and other democracies against fascist aggression and the threatening world war.

American Communists have always been proud of the achievements of the Russian Bolsheviks, under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, and are eager to make these achievements known and to explain them to the American masses. Since the capitalist press has naturally not been interested in reporting the successes of socialist construction in the Soviet Union, but on the contrary rather eager to report the opposite, the Communist press has reported what was happening in the Soviet Union. Millions of books and pamphlets dealing with various phases of life in the Soviet Union are being distributed throughout the country in the course of the regular educational work conducted by American Communists.

Numerous mass meetings are held yearly by the Communist Party at which the Soviet Union is included among the subjects of discussion, because of the tremendous interest which it occupies today in relation to international affairs. The anniversary meetings (November 7) and the Lenin memorial meetings (January 21) are annual gatherings held throughout the United States, and are especially devoted to a review of the progress in the Soviet Union which the genius of Lenin and Stalin helped to establish and maintain. Browder, Foster and other leaders of the Party always include the Soviet Union among the subjects which they discuss at meetings addressed by them, or in their writings.

When the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,* prepared under the supervision of the Central Committee of the Party, was recently published in the U.S.S.R., American Communists immediately recognized the great value of this book and an American edition in an English translation was made available with the intention of distributing, within a year, at least 250,000 copies among the members, their friends and co-workers and the American people generally. They are now at work completing the sale of the first 100,000 copies. Hundreds of groups in the United States are now engaged in careful reading and study of the book, with the purpose of learning about the forces which produced the Revolution, the Party under whose leadership it was accomplished, the establishment of socialism, and the lessons to be derived for the international working class.

* Earl Browder, *Fighting for Peace,* p. 249. International Publishers, New York.

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THE SOVIET PAVILION

When the World's Fair in New York was projected, and the news that the Soviet Union would participate was announced, all American progressives were jubilant; for those who have had no opportunity to travel to the Soviet Union, and the millions of Americans who would visit the Fair, would now be able to learn a great deal about the country, the people and their accomplishments.

The Soviet Pavilion erected at the World's Fair, stands as a symbol of the strength, imagination, and cultural niveau of the Soviet people. It is a veritable university for anyone who wishes to investigate the progress in the U.S.S.R. Visitors to the Pavilion find that they must come again, so exciting are the exhibits and so powerful is the impact of the ideas conveyed by everything shown there.

A recent inquiry made by the Fair administration among the visitors showed that the Soviet Pavilion was *sixth* among the hundreds of attractions at the Fair and *first* among exhibits from foreign countries.

The dynamic figure astride at the top of the marble pylon, with the red Soviet star in his hand, has been likened to the typical Soviet worker conscious of his mission and confident of his future. Next in prominence is the inscription on the pylon of the provision of the first article of the Stalinist Constitution:

"The Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics is a socialist state of workers and peasants." The facts adduced in the exhibits prove this to the hilt.

"I SAW THE FUTURE AND IT WORKS"

Lincoln Steffens, one of the greatest reporters and a great American, after visiting Soviet Russia in the years of its travail, in 1919, wrote the following prophetic, winged words: "I went to Russia, I saw the future, and it works." The future he saw twenty years ago is the present the Soviet peoples live in. That "it works" can be seen in the story of the progress of the Soviet peoples, starving and fighting with their backs to the wall as Steffens found them in 1919, and living now in a prosperous and powerful country engaged in the building of socialism. The "future" which Steffens was looking into, is now inscribed in the Soviet Constitution, declaring the Soviet Union to be a socialist state, which guarantees to all the inhabitants of the great expanse of territory known as the Soviet Union, the most fundamental rights which only a socialist society can provide for its citizens: *the right to work, the right to security, the right to education and the right to leisure.*

These rights have become a reality for 170,000,000 people in the Soviet Union today. American Communists have not misled the American people when they invited them to believe in the ultimate victory of the October Revolution and give it their support. The Soviet Union has firmly established true democracy, forged a powerful peace policy, and brought happiness and prosperity to its people. The people of America and other countries are beneficiaries of the achievements of the Russian Communards, who, in 1917, "stormed the heavens," and who today have established a socialist society on one-sixth of the earth.

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DATA ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

BY ROBERT MINOR

LENIN ON AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

THE most penetrating and, I think, almost the only truly fundamental analysis of the agriculture of the United States, from the viewpoint of political economy, was made 24 years ago by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.* Surprising is the fact that in these two and a half decades we of the United States have never published it in English,** although this will now soon be accomplished by International Publishers.

Lenin's study was based on the two censuses of 1900 and 1910. It was written, not originally for Americans, but to convince Russians that Russian agriculture, if given the same treatment, would inevitably follow the same course as the agriculture of the country which Lenin called "in many respects the model and ideal of our bourgeois civilization"—the United States. Lenin wrote to destroy in the minds of the Russian Narodniks (Populists) what he called "an illusion, a dream, a self-deception of the whole of bourgeois society," by proving that American agriculture was developing from the *free homesteads* of the early days—not to the triumph and dominance of family-sized farms, but to the rapid development of capitalism, whose "main trend" is "the elimination of small production by large-scale production both in industry and agriculture."

Lenin spoke of the most basic fact underlying the whole problem, that "the development of agriculture lags behind that of industry." He warned his Russian readers that this is not just a Russian phenomenon, but that:

> "This is characteristic of *all* capitalist countries and is one of the most important causes of the disproportion in the development of the different branches of national economy, of crises, and of the cost of living."

But even though its development lags behind that of industry, has not agriculture been tremendously affected by modern capitalism? Yes:

> "Capital liberated agriculture from feudalism, drew it into commercial exchange and thus into world economic development, and lifted it from the stagnation and inertia of medievalism and patriarchism."

Then how does it come about that, with this *liberation* of agriculture and

* V. I. Lenin, *New Data on the Laws of Development of Capitalism in Agriculture*, Part I, *Capitalism in the United States of America*.

** In 1918, Lenin mentioned to this writer the possibility of its being published in English.

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the application of the finest modern machinery, bringing production to unheard-of high levels—*the people of the farms are ruined!*

It was precisely from the American example that he taught the Russians:

"But capital did not abolish the oppression, the exploitation and poverty of the masses; on the contrary, it created these evils in a new form and restored their old forms on a 'modern' basis. Capitalism has not only failed to remove the contradiction between industry and agriculture; on the contrary, it has still further extended and sharpened it. Agriculture is being more and more borne down by the yoke of capital, which is formed primarily in the sphere of trade and industry."

The Narodniks were deceived by a tendency toward a decrease in the average *area* of farming units in the United States. This they misinterpreted as meaning that in the more highly developed regions "agricultural capitalism is disintegrating" and giving way to independent and thriving family-sized farms (which they called "toiler" farming). Large-scale farming, however, is not to be measured by the area of land.

"The main line of development of capitalist agriculture is that *small* farms, while still remaining small in area, *are being converted into big farms* as regards scale of production, the development of livestock farming, the quantity of fertilizer used, the extent to which machinery is employed, etc."

On the basis of statistics of the 1910 census, Lenin destroyed the illusion that family-sized farms were gaining or holding their own in relation to large-scale farming.

"*More than half* the total agricultural production of the country . . . is concentrated in *capitalist* farms that comprise only one-sixth of the total number of farms, yet spend on hired labor four times more than the average per farm (17.2 per cent of the farms spend 69.1 per cent of the total expenditure on hired labor), and half as much again as the average per acre. . . .

"At the other extreme, more than half (almost three-fifths) of the total number of farms (58.2 per cent) are non-capitalist farms. They comprise one-third of the total farm land (33.3 per cent), but this land is much more poorly equipped with machinery than the average (value of machinery—25.3 per cent); and they use less fertilizer than the average, only 29.1 per cent of the total expenditure on fertilizers. Accordingly, their productivity is *only one-third of the average*. Occupying one-third of the total farm land, this immense number of farms (58.8 per cent), which are most oppressed by the yoke of capital, contribute less than one-fourth (22.1 per cent) of the total output, of the total value of products."

But this growing predominance of large-scale capitalist farming did not arise *only* in the sense of immediate expropriation, said Lenin:

"This elimination process also includes a process of ruination, of deterioration of the conditions of farming of the small farmers, which may extend over years and decades. This deterioration manifests itself in overwork or underfeeding of the small farmer; in an increased burden of debt; in the deterioration of cattle fodder and the condition of cattle in general; in the deterioration of the methods of cultivating and manuring the land; in the stagnation of technical progress, etc."

Lenin gave a large share of his attention to the South as the section of the most backward agriculture—a section where capital has *not*—as it did in the rest of the country—"liberated agriculture from feudalism" or "lifted it from the stagnation and inertia of medievalism and patriarchism." This special attention to the South is a good example for all who seriously wish to understand American agricul-

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ture; a disabled agriculture, if only on scientific grounds, must be examined with much attention to its most retarded point. Lenin wrote:

". . . the economic survivals of *slavery* differ in no way from similar survivals of feudalism; and in the formerly slave-owning South of the U. S. these survivals are *very strong to this day.*"

"The largest number of tenant farmers are to be found in the South, . . . and here too, tenant farming is growing most rapidly; from 47.0 per cent in 1900 to 49.6 per cent in 1910."

"The typical white farmer of the U. S. owns his farm. The typical Negro farmer is a tenant farmer."

Over three-quarters of Negro farmers are tenant farmers. Half the farmers of the South are tenant farmers.

"But this is not all. The farmers we are discussing are not tenants in the European, civilized, modern capitalistic sense; they are mainly semi-feudal or—what is the same in the economic sense—*semi-slave share-tenants.* . . . And the proportion of share-tenants to the total number of farmers is not declining, but steadily and fairly rapidly rising. In 1880, 17.5 per cent of the total number of farmers in the U. S. were share-tenants, in 1900, 22.2 per cent; in 1910, 24.0 per cent. . . ."

"To characterize the South it is necessary to add that the population is fleeing from the South to other capitalist regions and towns, in the same way as in Russia the peasantry is fleeing from the most backward central agricultural gubernias, where the survivals of serfdom are most preserved. . . . The share-cropping region, both in America and in Russia, is the region of the greatest degradation and oppression. Immigrants to America, who play such an important part in its economic and social life, avoid the South."

"Capital destroyed the slave system half a century ago only to restore it in a new form, that is, in the form of share-cropping."

The Narodniks were misled by statistics based on a process of decrease in average size of farms in the South, where large old estates, almost unchanged except by decay since the Civil War, were being parcelled and sold on time payments to small farmers or leased to sharecroppers and other tenants.

Lenin insisted that the trend was *not* a transition to "toiler" farming (family-sized or self-sufficient farming), but that even in the most extremely backward sector of American agriculture the trend was inevitably a *transition to commercial farming.* He clinched it with the very effective remark:

"That the growth of small farming in the South is precisely the growth of commercial farming is confirmed by the nature of the principal agricultural product of the South. This crop is cotton."

I shall ask the reader to bear in mind this last remark as we proceed.

* * *

In citing Lenin we have not been speaking of the crisis of 1929, nor of its effects, but have been only quoting an analysis made many years before the crisis occurred. It is necessary to do so in order to make clear that there is no mystery in the historic process that affects *all* of agriculture in *all* capitalist countries, at *all* times since "capitalism liberated agriculture from feudalism, drew it into commercial exchange and thus into world economical development." This historic process has to be referred to because the long drawn-out contradiction between industry and agriculture prepared the condition for the inevitable accelerated ruin of agriculture at the time of crisis and must be understood

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if the crisis is to be understood.

But the economic and agriculture crisis of 1929 represents, not merely a continuation of the "process of ruination, of deterioration of the conditions of farming of the small farmers, which may extend over years and decades," of which Lenin writes in 1915; it represents a *break* in the process of gradual ruin—a sudden, catastrophic acceleration of the ruin, coming in new and terrible forms. Sometimes this break reverses some of the well-known economic formulae making huge displacements of population,* reversing the economic interest and sharply changing if not reversing political roles of sections of the ruined population.

So the immediate troubles that the farmers have to face today have to do with the economic crisis of 1929, interwoven with an agrarian crisis and the general crisis of capitalism which began with the outbreak of the World War. But the process of "ruination, of deterioration of the conditions of farming of the small farmers"—that had been going on even from the pioneer days of free homesteads—was the expression of the inherent position of agriculture in capitalist society. The crisis of 1929 came as a storm striking a weakened ship; more than that—a ship unable to trim its sails or adjust itself to the storm.

THIRTY YEARS OF FARMING

A. LOSING THE LAND

At the time of which Lenin wrote, despite the process of ruination of the small farmers, the gross income of farms was rising from year to year almost steadily. It was $6,238,000,000 in 1909 and continued to rise for ten years, reaching nearly three times that amount—$16,935,000,000, in 1919—its all-time high. This colossal farm income (speaking relatively) was one of the most important economic facts, and the basis for some of the most decisive political phenomena in American life in the decade and a half before the War. It continued to be so, even though the recession and low farm prices of 1921 brought the gross farm income down almost by half, to $8,927,000,000, from which it rose again quickly to above the $11,000,000,000 mark and then steadily gained to $11,941,000,000 in 1929.

Then came the sharp break of unprecedented proportions in 1929, which swept away more than half of the gross farm income, or two-thirds of it as compared to the income of 1919. At the depth of the Hoover slump, in 1933, the gross farm income sank to its lowest point in a quarter of a century—to $5,337,000,000, less than one-third of what it had been fourteen years before.

The total value of land, buildings, machinery and livestock combined, for all farms, was rising steadily at the time of which Lenin wrote. From $41,354,000,000 in 1910, it reached its highest total of $78,456,000,000 in 1920, declined in the early 1920's and regained to $57,670,000,000 in 1930, then plunged in the Hoover crisis to $36,235,000,000 in 1933, which I think is the lowest level for the present century. (All of these totals apply to *all* farms, including the rapidly rising capital values of the richest farms; therefore the figures for non-capitalist and poorly capitalized farms alone

* Such as migration of ruined farmers.

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would show much more catastrophic results.)

Mortgages, while not indicating poverty in all cases, did, during most of this period, show "the growth of expropriation," as Lenin said in citing the proportion of mortgaged farms: in 1890, 28.2 per cent; in 1900, 31.0 per cent; in 1910, 33.6 per cent. Lenin had information on farm mortgages only up to 1910, when the total was $3,320,470,000; but in the next ten years the amount of mortgages more than doubled, rising to $7,857,700,000 by 1920. In addition to this sum of mortgages, there were personal and collateral loans to farmers, by small country banks ($1,607,970,000 in 1914, increased to $3,869,891,000 in 1920), which, in the catastrophic fall of farm values and prices in the early 1920's, caused the wiping out of half of the country banks. An interesting result was the passing of a large part of such obligations at a fraction of their original value into the hands of the bigger financial concerns. The total of farm mortgages mounted to the huge sum of $9,469,000,000 in 1928, about one-sixth of the total value of all farm lands, buildings, machinery and livestock of all the farms in the United States—the greatest portion of which passed into the hands of the big insurance corporations.

But in 1930, with the economic crisis, a sharp reversal of the mortgage phenomenon began: In five years the value and number of farm mortgages fell by $1,569,187,000 on 172,910 farms; but we all know that this *decrease* in farm mortgage debts, and in the number of farms mortgaged, means the *loss of the farms;* for instance, in 1933 forced sales of farms were more than three times as numerous as voluntary sales. In the period of slow decay of the small farmers, the ruin was indicated by rising mortgage debt; but in the period of crisis the sudden ruin is indicated by a sharp *fall* in mortgages.

During all of this period, in "prosperous" as well as hard times, the small farmers had been almost steadily losing their equity in their land. If we go back 60 years to the height of the "homesteading" period, when millions of acres of virgin land were being distributed free to all who cared to settle on it, we find that, despite the free land, the loss of the farmer's equity in the land, on the whole, was an unbroken process from decade to decade. The American farmer owned:

In	1880	62% of his farm
	1890	59% of his farm
	1900	54% of his farm
	1910	50% of his farm
	1920	46% of his farm
	1930	41% of his farm
	1935	39% of his farm

In only nineteen states does the farmer now own as much as half of the farm he operates. The proportion of the area of farm land operated under lease has increased as follows:

1900	31%	1930	44%
1910	33%	1935	45%
1920	37%		

The number of tenant-farms has increased to the following percentage:

1880	25.8%	1920	38.1%
1890	28.4%	1930	42.4%
1900	35.3%	1935	42.1%
1910	37.0%		

Note well that after the crisis of 1929-30, the proportion of tenant-farming appears suddenly to have turned slightly *downward.* It is at-

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tributed to changes in the South where "former tenants and croppers"* sank to an even lower level of ruin. It is but another case where the *accelerated* ruin is expressed in reversal of figures.

The sharecropper form of tenant-farming—the "semi-feudal or semi-slave" form—has grown to a degree that is even more startling, not only by its increase in quantity, but by the fact that, as a mass phenomenon, it has now passed beyond the borders of the South where it was formerly mainly found. A huge strip of territory now extends from the Texas-Mexican border northward to the Canadian frontier of North Dakota, in which from nearly a third to 57 per cent of the farms are rented to sharecroppers. Lenin in 1915 fixed the proportion of sharecropper to the total of farms in the United States as being 17.5 per cent in 1880; 22.2 per cent in 1900; and 24.0 per cent in 1910. The total of farms rented on shares in 1930 is fixed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture at *35 per cent of all farms,* or 2,175,000 farms in number.**

"In most of the cotton belt more than half of all farms were tenant and cropper farms rented on shares in 1930. In Illinois, Kentucky, Kansas, Nebraska and the Dakotas about a third of all farms were tenant farms rented on shares; in Virginia, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri and Colorado, about a fourth; but in New England, New York, New Jersey and the Pacific Coast States, Utah, Nevada and Arizona, less than one-tenth of all farms were rented on shares. Share renting is not only the dominant system of renting farms, except in New England, New Jersey, Oregon, California and Nevada, but also it is the dominant system of tenure, measured by the number of farms, in seven Southern states." *

In the South the rate of tenancy was 56 per cent in 1930; and the average farm had 72 acres, of which 38 acres were harvested, the land and buildings being worth $2,960—less than one-third of the average for non-cotton farms of the United States. Of all tenant farms in the South 69 per cent were so small as to preclude anything better than slow starvation. In Mississippi 70 per cent of the farmers own no land whatever. Of all Negro tenants in the South 59 per cent were croppers who had to depend on landlords for work animals and usually for food and feed while making the crop. It is under *these* conditions that:

"Between 1930 and 1935 the rate of tenancy in the South decreased, owing largely to reduction in number of colored tenants and croppers. Some of these former tenants and croppers became wage hands and some migrated to the towns and cities." **

The cycle for American agriculture is: Farmers become tenants, tenants become croppers, croppers become wage hands, and wage hands become unemployed.

B. WAGE-LABOR IN AGRICULTURE

Lenin pointed in in 1915 the obvious truth and principle that "the chief features and criterion of capitalism in agriculture is wage labor," and he showed that in the United States—

"The development of wage labor, as well as the increase in the application of machinery, can be observed in *all* regions of the country and in all branches of agriculture. The number of hired laborers employed is

* H. A. Turner, *A Graphic Summary of Farm Tenure,* United States Dept. of Agriculture.

** *Ibid.*

* *Ibid.*

** *Ibid.*

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growing more rapidly than the rural population and the total population of the country. The increase in the number of farms lags behind the total increase in the rural population. Class contradictions are becoming stronger and sharper."

And from 1909 to 1929, *i.e.*, for twenty years after the 1910 census from which Lenin derived his facts, the trend of employment of wage labor in American agriculture was *upward*—with certain fluctuations caused by (a) the military draft in 1917-18, and (b) the general economic decline in the early 1920's. The index figure for hired farm labor continued, on the whole, upward, from 97 in 1909 to 101 in 1929.* Most striking is the fact that the absolute rise in the number of agricultural wage workers accompanied a decline of nearly half a million in the total farm population, and while there was a *fall* in the index of persons "employed" including unpaid family workers in agriculture from 111 in 1909 to 99 in 1929.

The "stubborn" increase in the number of wage workers indicated, during those two decades, a steady rise of the capitalist agriculture.

The great economic crisis of 1929, however, brought a *reversal* of the process: The absolute number of hired workers in agriculture turned sharply *downward,* falling from an index figure of 101 in 1929 to 80 in 1934—more than 20 per cent.

It is a phenomenon of the unprecedented economic crisis and as such it coincided with a sharp increase in the swallowing of agriculture by finance capital. It is a result partly of the devastating impoverishment of the several smaller categories of farmers, and the introduction of labor-saving machinery on rich farms.

The fall in the number of *hired* workers is accompanied by a *rise* in the number of *unpaid* family workers, from an index figure of 99 in 1929 to 103 in 1935. For 1929 the census recorded for each 100 farms only 26 persons employed as unpaid family workers in addition to the farm operator. But the 1935 agricultural census showed 63 unpaid family workers per 100 farms—nearly two and a half times as many members of the farmer's family working in the fields unpaid.* Formerly about two in five farmers employed wage labor; now it is about one in seven; and approximately 2,000,000 farmers who were independent in 1929, and nearly a half million of whom presumably were then employers of labor, are now hiring themselves out as part-time laborers.

Certainly, the corporation farms are not considered here; the members of their boards of directors have none of their wives and children working in the fields, nor are they hiring themselves out. The corporation farms are employing in general *more* wage labor; and in particular cases where this is not true, it is because of introduction of *labor-saving machinery,* and hence an indication of a still further stage of capitalist engorgement of agriculture.** The fluctuation in the total expenditure of all farms for hired labor corresponds to changes in

* This is disputed, but, nevertheless, proven by census figures given in W.P.A. research project pamphlet entitled *Trends in Employment in Agriculture 1909-36.*

* There is possibility of exaggeration, but the trend is as indicated.

** Lenin showed that a diminution of the number of agricultural workers in Germany from 1882 to 1895 did not disprove the laws of capitalist development in agriculture.

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the number of workers employed and in wage rates: $652,000,000 in 1909, increased by more than two and a half times, to $1,636,000,000 in 1920; from which it fell catastrophically to $440,000,000 in 1933, only a little more than one-fourth of its high level of 1920. In homely terms this means daily wages with board averaged $1.04 in 1909, rose to $2.84 in 1920 and fell to 86 cents in 1933.*

It is clear that any idea that the *present* fall in the number of wage workers in agriculture indicates a "revival" of the small farm, or family-sized farm, would be lunacy.

C. CONCENTRATION OF CAPITAL IN AGRICULTURE

But the farms themselves—the land—cannot wander; it is rapidly passing into direct possession of large aggregations of capital. Large-scale farming is developing, both on the basis of increased capital investment upon relatively small land units *and* through the adding together of the foreclosed land of many small areas.

Before the depression began in 1929, there were 7,875 farms with incomes of $30,000 or more and an average value of $196,000 for land and buildings, spending an average of $13,385 per farm for hired labor, and producing per farm an average of $63,409. But of these "giant" farms many were small in area, the value arising from high capitalization and intensive methods; 331 of them were less than 25 acres, nevertheless they were "giant" farms in amount of production.** Others are gigantic in area; many of these are in the Great Plains wheat region, and are the result of the money-lending operations of the big insurance corporations to which we have referred. As indicated, farm mortgages cease to exist, not by being paid off, but by being foreclosed. During the depression years from 1929 to 1938, insurance companies took away from farmers $619,000,000 worth of farms. The process has inevitably brought chain-farming with huge tracts of land cultivated by centralized management and uniform methods, stretching across the continent, not only sopping up the market by mass-methods, but brazenly claiming (and getting!) a share amounting to millions of dollars of A.A.A. payments intended for farmers in need.

The most significant examples of the present trend are to be found on the Pacific Coast where the concentration of agriculture in California in recent years has become one of the marvels of history. It is agriculture of extreme variety, but very largely fruit and vegetables, highly commercialized, not only for the national, but also for the world market, and developed in intricate connection with food-processing, packing, canning, etc. Livestock, cotton, grain and many other crops, as well as irrigation and transport enterprises and metal mining, are coordinated in the same enterprises, under the same corporation owners, who are closely associated with large banks.

The California Packing Corporation, for illustration, has about 8,500,000 invested in ranches and $2,500,000 other capital in land (of which 20,000 acres are in orchards), and which has also $11,000,000 in buildings, $16,000,000 in machinery and equipment, and

* *Agricultural Statistics*, p. 450.
** *Resettlement Administration*, a pamphlet, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1936.

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owns many subsidiaries including the "Oregon," the "Philippine," the "Dixie," and the "Alaska" packing corporations, the last named of which is worth $10,789,000; also terminals worth $881,000. The "Philippine" and "Alaska" corporations operate canning and packing plants in ten states and Hawaii and are described as having current assets of $34,819,889, fixed assets of $64,217,759 and a working capital of $22,867,217, and business connections with fifty banks. This hybrid giant employed 35,000 men and women as seasonal workers, made $16,751,118 net sales for 1937, with a profit of $4,895,330. (An increase in dividends of 300 per cent was paid over 1936.)

To a short list of such corporations is attributed approximately $400,000,000 of the farm production of California, more than half of the total.

The oldest and the classic example of gigantic enterprises of Miller and Lux now owning 178,107 acres in Californian, Oregon and Idaho, and 80 per cent of the San Joaquin Canal and Irrigation Co. (valued at $2,000,000) and 84 per cent of Buena Vista Associates, Inc., which holds 23,556 acres, and earned in 1937 $2,087,565.

The Earl Fruit Co. not merely owns and operates 17,556 acres—presumably intensively developed because the value of its land was given in 1937 as $10,129,032, nearly three-quarters of a million dollars for each acre it operates—but also owns and operates 60 packing houses and warehouses and a lumber and box company, *and* 100 per cent of the stock of Baltimore Fruit Exchange and the majority of stock in the New York Fruit Auction Co. as well as minority interests in marketing corporations in Chicago, Pittsburgh and elsewhere, and sold $6,323,168 worth of produce in 1937.

Pasco Produce and Development Co. is the corporation of similar character through which the Hoover brothers, Allen and Herbert Hoover * operate and accumulate wealth befitting the family of a retired President, chief of the Republican Party, guide of the Liberty Leaguers and leader of the effort to add North and South America to the Berlin-Rome-Tokio-Madrid Axis.

Transamerica Corporation apparently is one of the biggest channels of ownership by finance capital of Pacific Coast agriculture; it controls 483 branch banks in California, 32 in Oregon, and nine in Nevada, which together are reported as holding nearly $1,620,000,000 of assets and $1,424,000,000 of deposits. The Transamerica Corporation owns and controls operation of 500,000 acres of land through California Lands, a corporation worth $13,831,705, producing peaches, prunes, grapes, potatoes, barley, hay, oil, gas and minerals, and reporting an "income" of $2,552,925 in 1936.

Included in the control of Transamerica Corporation are nine large corporations engaged in banking, financing, marketing, life insurance, fire insurance, and metal mining.

In competition with such "farmers," the farmers of the Pacific Coast and other fruit-growing regions are compelled to struggle for a market for credit and for prices covering their much higher cost of production per unit. Such corporations not only "com-

* *The Rural Observer*, San Francisco, Sept.-Oct., 1938, is the source of most of this material.

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pete" with small growers, but in their dual capacity as packers they often become the sole buyers of other farmers' products. It is reported that the California Packing Corporation forced down the farm price of prunes to one and a half cents a pound (less than the cost of fertilizer and water), similarly reduced its buying price for cherries, and that the "CalPak" and the Canners Industry Board together accomplished the almost incredible feat of beating down their buying price of peaches from $45.00 per ton in 1937 to $4 and $5 per ton in 1938.

The political activity of these corporations finds its channel through the national organization of the Republican Party and the Liberty League, through Herbert Hoover personally, and, in its immediate territory, through the Merriam Republican state machine and the Associated Farmers. The Associated Farmers has been transformed into its arm of espionage and extra-legal violence since April, 1937. It is a mistake to think of the Associated Farmers as an organization of purely local significance. Its origin is traced back to its formation in Minnesota, first calling itself the "Farmers' Independent Council," when it is said to have been financed by Alfred P. Sloan Jr., head of General Motors, Lammot du Pont, G. E. Baldwin (of Libby, McNeil & Libby), A. C. Corbishly (of Swift and Co.) and R. E. Fischer of the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. Now with its center in California and its name changed to "Associated Farmers," it is supported by all big railroad companies, chiefly the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe lines, and the principal utility corporations headed by the company that arranged the frameup of Tom Mooney, the Pacific Gas and Electric Co.

* * *

Why is it necessary to present so grim a picture?

It is necessary to present the farmers' situation in the present-day crisis in its true colors in order to convince the farmers of the necessity to fight, to fight quickly, and to identify whom they must fight.

On the other hand, it was necessary to show the background of long-time deterioration and creeping ruin during the past half-century, in order to prove that there can be no solution for the farmers in that trap which their enemies set, of a return to the past of supposed "independent" and "rugged" individualism—to dispel the illusion that "all the farmers need is to be let alone."

Success of the popular cause in the election of 1940 is a matter of reconsolidating the tremendous people's majority of 1936—which hinges upon, first, the unity of the trade union movement, and, second, the reassembling of the big farmers' majority.

To both labor and the farmers it must be made clear, first, that their interests in common are the basis for the democratic unity of the nation itself, and, secondly, that their unity in action in 1940 on an immediate program already clearly enough established in the well-known demands of the majority of the people, demands which have been incorporated in the political resolutions at the Communist Party's Tenth Convention, will make the people's cause invincible.

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